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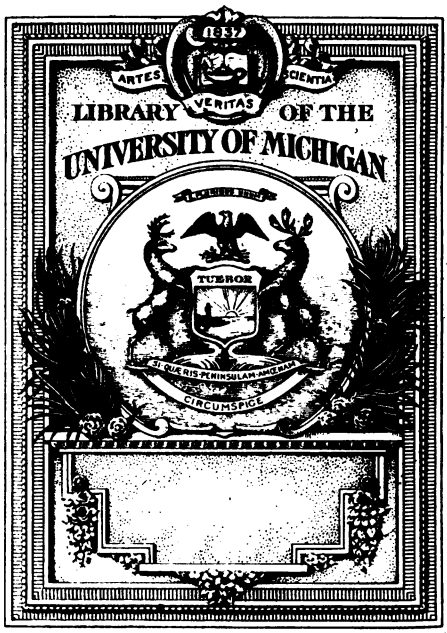
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THE

CHILDREN'S BOWER;

OR,

WHAT YOU LIKE.

BY KENELM HENRY DIGBY.

Sæpe sub exiguo munere magna latent.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE

CHILDREN'S BOWER,

&c.

CHAPTER XI.

MANY things are best told by music—let the admission be received as it may, and it would be easy, of course, to ridicule it as only a proper avowal of individual incapacity. Words, however happily chosen and skilfully combined, prove really very often but a poor substitute for a simple melody. They frequently seem to invest every thing, I know not how, with a certain cold, and almost repulsive air; they seem often actually to spoil our previous conception of the subject, obliging us to behold only a part of it, and that too, perhaps, even exclusively on its defective side. If we would convey an idea of much that passes in the Children's Bower, I think we can only hope to succeed after the book has been laid down, when some one else will come to our assistance, not even perhaps intentionally, with one of those sweet English songs which bring tears into the eye, and call back infinite memories.

A real bona fide arbour, facing the south-west, its walls composed of twisted oak stems, with moss and heath between them; its front opening upon a gravel walk between flower

beds, evergreens, and a smooth sunny lawn, having the view bounded by the trees which screen the garden, is a favourite resort of our little people; while the tall youngsters rather disdain it, as though it were a patent tin arbour, pretending, forsooth, that it savours too much of a city taste for them, as if that in itself were something very contemptible. It is to be wished, once for all, that the grounds of such judgments were sifted before they were allowed to pass. So late even as in the time of Sir Thomas More, it was deemed an honour to be a cockney, the being born or educated in London counting for a kind of nobility. But all tastes for social life in common were despised by those who felt attracted towards the wildness and pride of a savage state, which needed no altars. That, however, does not concern us at present. In this summer-house, then, very pretty and delightful, however resembling the seats that receive the youth of Cockayne upon a holiday, sheltered from the sharp winds of March, as in an Arcadian bower, and warm, even at that early season, as if exposed to the sun of Provence, little John has been known to entertain the broken-down soldier, wending his way home from the Crimea; and here he has himself been often caught, when left at home alone, saying his beads very devoutly; but just as ready as ever to laugh, or to bundle them into his pocket, and to run after you for any other project if you should think fit to interrupt him; for on these occasions he was not exactly like Gloucester, who, divinely bent to meditation, could be moved in no worldly suit to draw him from his pious exercise, or if obliged to yield, who would after some canting words return to his "holy work" again. I trow there was some difference between them. And besides, this fine, I was within an ace of saying old Christian, loved very heartily your secular employment, though it were only splitting pea pods with some one he liked, or making a grass whistle.

Ulysses wished himself once more young in order that he might find favour, and that some one might be induced to give him a new cloak. There are other gifts better than a cloak, the desire of which might prompt a man of mature age to repeat the words, and say from the depths of his own heart—

Ὡς νῦν ἠβώοιμι.

Let us proceed to observe wistfully, and as silently as is compatible with our purpose, what lessons of piety to serve, not as a cloak for hypocrites, but as the ornament of man's nature, may be obtained in the Children's Bower. We mean no offence, no deception; any one can observe these things, however ill qualified he may be to talk about them.

In the world, among persons long grown up, as few need be reminded, piety is often a thing either alternately ignored and despised, or, for there's no use in mincing matters, a quality miserably abused and counterfeited.

For those who despise it, seeking by sceptical arguments to disprove its value, Plato has left one of the most sublime passages that occurs in the whole of his writings; and it is for us to observe that what he seems to detest most in them, is the renouncement of the thoughts and manners of the Children's Bower, and the non-appreciation of both, which is involved in the very position they assume. "Come," he says, "tell us, how can any one speak without a feeling of anger respecting those who make these denials, from not being impressed by what they have heard, even from young children, and when they were fed with milk from their nurses and mothers, and by what was spoken, as it were, in epodes, both in sport and in earnest; and together with sacrifices, hearing it in prayers, and seeing the sights that follow it, which a young person sees and hears with the greatest delight, while their parents are making a sacrifice with the greatest earnestness, and taking for granted all that the infidel denies by their acts of adoration, and giving not even a handle for suspicion that what he says is true;—they who despise all this—how can any one in mild language admonish them*?" However, without alluding longer to these formal antagonists, we find traces in another form of the same opposition to the piety of the bower. "The action of the university," says Emerson, "is directed more on producing an English gentleman, than a saint or a psychologist." In this little Arcadian school of children, one might have thought the two things very compatible; and, indeed, one would have to look no farther for proof than the example of this eldest

* Leges x.

brother, who, while every inch the gay young English gentleman, had in him the making of something higher, having even already the fervent, lively faith, and unobtrusive piety of the continental Christian, if purblind travellers will allow the expression to pass. But in the world, wherever there is pride, and the mere moral qualities that constitute respectability, maturity and age are apt to reverse the sacred maxim, and think, at least, if not pronounce piety to be good for nothing. They are, at the best, apt to regard it as an equivocal excess; which judgment arises, as a philologist remarks, from the scepticism of the world, that questions the eventual retribution of the industry spent in devotion, or of the privations, if they can be called such, incurred from sanctity. What are the consequences? Why, in spite of all their seeming virtues,

> "Men awless, lawless live, most hideous case!
> Men, no more men, a God-contemning race *."

Long grown-up persons are often apt to fancy, secretly at least, that the moral man needs not piety; and there is a tendency in many of the wise and practical, who have forgotten altogether the faith and language of the Children's Bower, to adopt the old opinion expressed by Cicero in these curious words, "Men have external goods, vines, corn, olives, all the prosperity of life from the gods; virtutem autem nemo umquam Deo acceptam retulit; and rightly," adds the philosopher, "for on account of virtue we glory; who ever returned thanks to the gods for being a good man? but for being rich, honoured, and safe; for Jove does not make men just, temperate, or wise, but secure, opulent, and successful. This is the judgment of all mortals, that fortune is to be sought from God, wisdom from ourselves †." This was pretty well, no doubt, for the age when it was written; but men grow wiser every day; and every one can see what a prodigious progress, in regard to such ideas, has been effected in recent times, when no one will understand the spirit of the Countess Matilda, as evinced in the manner in which she used to sign her name, the letters being grouped round a cross, with "Dei gratia si

* Drummond. † De Nat. Deorum.

quid est" added; for assuredly the most accredited opinion now, where the voices of children and youths, and of the women who love them, are not heard, is, that men are what they are by means of themselves—that they must owe even their opulence and success, their security and fortune, as well as their virtue and their wisdom, to themselves and to nothing else.

Piety can hardly rank very high in the estimation of persons who, like many that are advanced in years, have ceased to consider for what reason it should exist at all in the world. "Comment peut-on aimer Dieu," asks Madame de Sevigné, "quand on n'en entend jamais parler comme il convient?" "No carnal lover, though in this respect almost insane, can so burn with affection for his beloved one," says St. Chrysostom, "as God burns with love for our souls." This would be thought shocking language now. But, for all that, as a great modern writer says, "If for every rebuke that we utter of men's vices, we put forth a claim upon their hearts; if for every assertion of God's demands from them, we could substitute a display of his kindness to them; if side by side with every warning of death, we could exhibit proofs and promises of immortality; if, in fine, we were to show men a near, visible, inevitable, but all-beneficent Deity, whose presence makes the earth itself a heaven, I think there would be fewer deaf children sitting in the market-place *." "The young," says Baldesanus, with great simplicity, omitting mention of fanatics and libellers of God with a good conscience, who are just as dangerous company, "should never associate with the kind of men who are called politicians, temporizers, who measure all religion and conscience by utility; and who, in regard to the worship of God, seem never to have heard of Him †." Men of mature age and imagined wisdom, are apt also to consider that they have done all that can be required of them, when they have indulged in high intellectual speculations about the nature of God, forgetting, as Picus of Mirandula says, "that it is a great folly not to love God in this life, since we attain to far greater things by loving than by knowing Him, or speaking about

* Modern Painters. † Stimul. Virtut. Adolescent.

Him." Nevertheless, those who adopt the spirit incident, at all events, to the schools and to the world, rather than that of the Children's Bower, appear resolved rather on seeking by knowledge never to find what they seek, than on possessing by loving what, without love, we should even find in vain; "et tamen volumus, quærendo per cognitionem nunquam invenire quod quærimus, quam amando possidere, quod sine amore frustra etiam inveniremus."

Children trained in the old Christian way, can teach us by their artless example to love God—the one thing necessary; as even the experience of poor sinners might tell them, when they feel what it is not to have a supreme object of love; and, at all events, as Bernard Marcas the troubadour sings, in his quaint impressive language,

> "———— la terra granda
> (Ou l'Escritura ment), lon firmament que branda,
> Prendra autra figura. Enfin tout perirá,
> Fors que l'Amour de Dieu, que toujours durara."

But how does piety show itself in the Bower? What sort of thing, after all, is it? Here, too, there is much to learn. Julius Cæsar, in the procession of his four triumphs, his chariot breaking down, was so affected by the mischance that he never afterwards, it is said, ascended a vehicle without repeating a charm. The mind of Julius Cæsar, the greatest intelligence, the most practical genius perhaps that ever was given to the world, could not get over the need of fearing and worshipping the invisible, the supernatural. Is it not better to take a lesson from one of these simple boys or girls, trained to the common religious exercises of Christians, so referable to a spiritual and intellectual principle, rather than to be left like Cæsar, and like so many other great men in modern times, to make out for oneself substitutes, which will prove superstitious in spite of all their vaunted philosophy, and not merely harmlessly so, but noxious and debasing in their nature? Children, in regard to piety, "remembering their Creator in the days of their youth," have the devotion which Goldsmith, judging from what he thought he could detect as the spirit of the poor, or perhaps from what he remembered having seen in lands of faith,

ascribed to the common people in his time, and which seemed to him of such importance that he would, as he says, have law on its side. "Did law," he says, "conspire with their enthusiasm, we should not only be the happiest nation upon earth, but the wisest also." He proceeds to argue virtually, that to preserve the piety of the young should be the chief object of politics; that a society influenced by it, and governed by reason among the great, would be the most indissoluble, virtuous, and efficient that can be imagined; and that we should encourage such piety, by which alone political society can subsist.

But in the Children's Bower it is not alone the importance and outward form of piety that we learn; there is another tiny lesson to be obtained there, which teaches the difference between the spirit of false and true piety; for, be it whispered only, since the fact should grieve most the frivolous, and it is tiresome to have the faults of what is excellent pointed out, as they are always sure to be, over and over again; many of these grown-up and mature people, if they do not ignore and despise it, exercise a disposition under the same name which yields very different results from what true piety produces, both as respects themselves and others who stand in relation to them, who would not know the things that pertain to such a state of mind, and yet who must perforce be their acquaintance.

"In the middle ages," says a great author, "hardly any thing but vice could be caricatured, because virtue was always visibly and personally noble. Human beauty was not then disdained; now, virtue itself is apt to inhabit such poor human bodies, that no aspect of it is invulnerable to jest." How many are there whose warped looks proclaim what store their heart is made of! Would you much like to march through Coventry with them? Let us see how far this modern piety, as manifested in some adults, can account for this phenomenon, not, of course, speaking from my own judgment on a subject so far from me, but referring to what every one says, exclaiming with poor Ninon on one occasion,—

"Seigneur, que de vertus vous me faites haïr!"

"The best of God's friends," observes a quaint English aut[h]

"have a smack of hypocrisy. It is the lot of few, if of any, to be free from every stain of it." If this be true, how glorious is the exemption of children and youths! each of whom must walk like one of the lions, instead of putting on a serious face, and carrying his head as if he looked for pins in the street. Young people, at least, are free from all taint of this kind; and the beauty of their character, in consequence, when only seen, constitutes of itself a source of most important instruction. Youth has an invincible dislike and opposition in its nature to gravity; not, as a great author well distinguishes, to gravity as such;—for, where gravity is wanted, it can be grave and serious enough, as the example of our Tom can prove, whose look and demeanour, the natural expression of what he felt, when occasions required it, might have awed any one to solemnity of heart;—but it is an enemy to the affectation of it, when it appears only a cloak for ignorance or for folly. It does not like to see people muffled up in a quantity of that dark drab of mental manufacture which will serve them to such little purpose when one day they are undressed. The young, moreover, have other exemptions as well. In life, as in a book, there may be, as a great author says, "too much, not religion, but too many good words, till it becomes a rhapsody of words." The young have no taste for this manna; but they are not the worse for wanting it. When the Church represents us as "divina institutione formati," she supposes us to be repeating after her the Paternoster,—audibly, nothing more. There is, again, a counterfeit form which the mature of age will often present for piety. It is that spirit of rigour which makes the mind suffer, "leaving free things and happy shows behind,"—which grows indignant that there should be such a thing as youth and beauty,—which turns kindness into aversion,

> "And with grim logic proves beyond debate
> That all we love is worthiest of our hate*!"

This is what brings us

> "——— to that dull calamity,
> To that strange misbelief of all the world,

---

* Holmes.

> And all things that are in it, that we fear
> We shall fall like a tree, and find our grave,
> Only remembering that we grieve."

There is even a false piety that not only isolates men from each other, but prompts them to open cruelty. "People used to say," says Brantome, "that one should beware of the Patenostres of Monsieur the Constable; for, while jabbering his prayers, he used to say, 'Go and hang me such a one, run me pikes through this other, cut me in pieces all these scoundrels.'" This piety of Anne de Montmorency, in the reign of Henry II., it is needless to show, was never learned in the Children's Bower.

In thus running over signs of the false piety, perhaps you think I go too fast; but I'm not come to my pace yet. There is another sort of piety, which children and youth, ever penetrating and quick to distinguish things, would teach us to avoid, therein agreeing even with the world itself, that no less detects and condemns it. "For," as the Père de Neuville says, "that humility so haughty, so fruitful in jealousies, in delicacy, in sensibilities, and less earnest in avoiding praise than in flying from humiliations; that charity into which glides so many aversions, antipathies, railleries, criticisms, and defamations,—charity so prompt to be irritated at a slight insult, and so slow to kindle at the misery of the poor,—so prodigal in vain compassion, and so sterile in benefits; that zeal made up of pride, hardness, bitterness, satire,—that zeal which shows itself in turning a secret sin into a public scandal; that love of God, so ingeniously assorted and reconciled with the love of self, always at peace with the love of self; that piety so scrupulous, so fearful, with which, however, one has found the secret of reconciling projects of elevation and ambition, the taste for intrigue, the art of governing by flattery, of using devotion for reputation, and of leaving aside all that could injure one's fortune"—all this the very world itself hates and despises. There is no other humility respected by children and the world, but that which is sincere and frank, which aspires to nothing and is puffed up with nothing, which enjoys honours without pride and loses them without murmurs, which feels its defects and ignores its virtues, as far from esteeming self as from despising others. In the judgment of the young and of the

world, too, there is no other charity but that of the saints, which is circumspect and reserved in its judgments, gentle in its words, amiable in its manners, tender in its sentiments, generous in its benefits, indulgent and prompt to pardon. In their judgment there is no other zeal to form saints but a zeal of peace and sweetness, able to correct without scandalizing, to reprove without exasperating, to gain the sinner and destroy the sin,—zeal attentive to save the sinner before God without losing him before men, and to take from him his vices while caring for his reputation. Such are the virtues that children and youth, and the world itself, expect from the saints; and if you were to suppose other and wider ways, the children and the world would take the part of the Gospel against you. You see, then, what important lessons in this respect the bower, as well as the world, can yield you. Children know of no other saints but such as have that judicious and reasonable sanctity which neither exaggerates nor weakens any thing, which neither scandalizes the world by its indulgence, nor shocks it by a proud and morose austerity,—which is gentle and complaisant, giving to God all that He demands, and refusing nothing to the world that God permits to be granted to it.

Upon the whole, the piety which is recognized as genuine in the bower is that kind of disposition which the world itself cannot behold without admiring; "for," as the Père Boutauld says, "not one fine quality belonging to the human character should fail to be found in you with grace. It is," he adds, "one of the saddest things, and the most worthy of lamentation, to see sinners who appear in the eyes of the world with much honour and much heart, and to see devout people who have neither, and who seem persuaded that the correction of their natural and insupportable defects ought not to be placed among the duties of devotion and grace *."

We have, then, only to observe closely the piety of the children to learn from it how to distinguish the true from the false devotion. For children have not what the Père de Neuville calls piety of humour, when one inclination reigns over other inclinations, one disposition over another, pride over pleasure,

* Les Conseilles de la Sagesse.

chagrin over gaiety, malignity over impressionableness,—when we obey only ourselves, are directed and restrained only by ourselves, and when we have, in short, no one Christian virtue, not being just with the justice of Christ. "Grown-up people are often pious merely according to their humours. The haughty and proud woman makes piety consist in avoiding what would lessen her reputation and in appearing strictly virtuous, in giving to pride the heart to which she denies pleasure. The gay and dissipated one makes piety consist in her sweetness and moderation. The ambitious man makes it consist in the contempt of riches, pleasures, and in the love of labour; the avaricious and self-interested man in avoiding intemperance and prodigality. The vindictive, haughty soul makes it consist in scorning what is base, and blushing at an affront. The slave of human respect makes it consist in secret virtue hidden from the world. The intelligence that is curious and greedy of knowledge makes it consist in avoiding the sins of the heart; the careless and dissipated in so avoiding those of the mind*." Children and young people seem to have the secret of piety by instinct. They know that it consists in renouncing their vicious inclinations and obeying God, not in following those inclinations under a mask, and submitting only to themselves.

But it is not alone in a negative way that we can learn in the Children's Bower to distinguish the true from the false piety. We are presented in it, by means of examples, with the most direct and formal directions to recognize the latter. Men can often be forced through reasoning to confess that they have not spoken correctly. But after all, much may not have been gained. They may seem, as Plato says, "to be still in want of enchantments by certain words†." If this be the case now, I would say, let them apply to the Children's Bower; for the mere sight of what exists there will often be more conducive than any logic to soften, as if by enchantment, the most obdurate, and win over to what they have abandoned, or to what they have not before admired, the long unwilling.

In the first place we can observe from what passes here, that piety is a genuine quality, harmonious with nature and with the

* Sur la Nécessité de réprimer son Humeur. † Leges x.

type of humanity as originally existing in the Eternal Mind. We see proof that it does not involve this compound creature, which is formed of body and soul, in disorder and confusion, by rendering either of the elements too strong for the other, thereby filling one of them with diseases, and causing it to waste away, but that it recognizes the safety for both, as consisting in neither being moved without the other, in order that by mutual resistance they may be properly balanced and in perfect health. We see that as the stone falls to the earth, so youth is found to be cheerful. "The natural will, without deliberation," says Gerson, "is always right, conformable to the Divine will, and to its first institution. God wishes heavy bodies to fall, and light bodies to rise; and similarly plants and irrational animals wish what it is intended they should wish; and hence arises a beautiful occupation of the mind watching these different inclinations, and following them up to those of the rational creature towards God and virtue in general. The natural inclination without deliberation, as it is in itself, that is, as it exists without that about which it deliberates, cannot sin," (mind, it is Gerson who is saying all this,) "for sin is with deliberation. If a man," he continues, "is pleased with seeing or hearing beautiful things, there is no sin of necessary consequence; for this is in accordance with nature. The rational will is joined with deliberation, and this can choose what is good or evil, and this is the will that we mean to subject when we say, 'Fiat voluntas tua;' but the mere natural will without deliberation is precisely what it was intended to be*." If it be asked, Then how do we know what the Divine intention was with respect to the character of piety? we answer that we come to a knowledge of it by a very simple deduction. We see the fact that youth, without offending against goodness, is cheerful, joyous, playful; like nature itself, as she often shows herself, almost as merry as she is wise; and it would be difficult to suppose that youth was originally intended to be any thing else but what we find it. This is its natural will without deliberation. Do you desire to know the mind of God in respect to what youth ought to be? Nothing easier. Watch these boys and

* Explicatio hujus Sent. Fiat voluntas tua.

girls trundling their hoops, dancing in a ring, sitting on their heels by the margin of a pond to feed what they call the school of ducks that gathers round them, singing their little songs as they walk or work, doing every thing with such an air of innocent gaiety, of grace, of love, and humility, that you find it impossible to look at them or listen to them without loving them, without a hearty laugh at the thought of suspecting worldliness in them, as if they were capable of harbouring any one of its thoughts,—without suffering, in fact, a kind of enchantment. Well, each of these poor boys and girls soon passes, either by death or by transformation of character; for six or seven years often suffice to change all,—

"At genus immortale manet."

The race, the successive recipients of the immortal mould, have been going on this way for these thousands of years. Now, no man makes the idea, as Plato would say, of such children; evidently, then, God made them thus, and intended them to be exactly what you find them; and, therefore, what pleases you in them must please Him; and all these smiles, and kisses, and arch tricks, and winning little ways, are all what He deemed appropriate and good. Now, their piety is compatible with all this; and they don't abate one jot of it for all the rest. But we are told from on high that "of such is the kingdom of heaven;" therefore, if there are men who think that piety is irreconcilable with joy, and the playfulness of a youthful nature,—if there are men who are all purity, no humanity, all simplicity, no honesty, and who, by the way, be it said, if you never trust them will never deceive you,—if there are men whose piety, made up of two ingredients, natural dishonesty and artificial dissimulation, generates such creatures as, one may confidently affirm, God never made*,—if there are persons, all cheerfulness in theory, who will hear of no human diversion in practice, inveighers against gloom, who do all in their power to prevent its being dissipated;—by coming to the bower they can learn from children to amend or modify their opinion, and learn, as a witty author says, that the concrete called "a good body" is

* Overbury.

worth a score of mean souls. Then that they should discover piety to be not what they may have hitherto thought it was, having seen it as in a model, will be no feat of wisdom. Look at little John and at his elder brother. Each would play with any thing, and be a boy right out; but each remembered his Creator, and failed not every night and morn, on bended knees, to raise his heart to Him. Little John used generally, as he left the chapel each morning, to go into fits of laughter with the next that followed him outside the door. No one ever thought of reproving him for it, as it was evidently only the expansion of his buoyant spirits, that had been pent up and suppressed while at his prayers. But yet, who knows? Perhaps it had a higher cause. A little philosophy might easily explain it; but, perhaps, as some one says, "a little more would leave it among the most interesting of mysteries." At all events, he was about leaving for a place which we find designated, at least in one old Christian monument, as a place of laughter, this vale of tears.

The chariot of God, says the Psalmist, is drawn by millions of men and by millions of persons who rejoice; but, he adds, "the Lord is in them." "These words," says St. Augustin, "signify the multitude of the faithful and the source of their felicity *."

Piety, then, as we learn in the bower, is joyful in its manners, and it has the source of all true joy for its source. The children's appreciation of it is in conformity with that of reason and the conscience of man. It is to be a genuine, healthy state of mind,—boyish, girlish, youthful, manly, womanly,—not a morbid, artificial, unnatural disposition, self-created, and in antagonism with the Divine ideal. It is not the disposition of these persons, who are ever fearful, scrupulous, and distrustful. They tell us "there is nothing which God cannot effect." We might reply to them with the philosopher, "I wish He had effected that they might be wise, so as not to believe all things with superstitious solicitude and misery." The Duc Mazarin used to wish that the front teeth of young women might be drawn to prevent them from being vain of their beauty; and in the order which

* In Ps. lxvii.

he used to give to his stewards and bailiffs, he entered into details with a view to the direction of the thoughts of his tenantry, which used to perplex sadly those unlucky officers *. The piety of the Children's Bower resembles that of the Père de Chevigny, who, with all his devotion, lived, as the Duc de Saint-Simon says, "toujours gaiement et avec liberté." It will prompt such words as these of the Psalmist, "I will expect thy name, because it is sweet." "The world," adds St. Augustin, "is bitter. Thy name is sweet. Though there are some things sweet in this world, one digests them only with bitterness. I prefer thy name to all, not alone because of its greatness, but even because of the sweetness that is contained in it †." It is not a delusion and an imaginary good, such as worldly reputation, respectability, and temporal advantage, which prompts the true piety: "I will bless thy name because there is nothing better than thy name, I will bless it because it is good ‡." It was a wise saying of Johnson, that a youthful passion for abstracted devotion should not be encouraged; but that practical and human piety which is suitable to their years. Children feel the truth of all this. Conscience tells them that what they love God loves. And how excellent, and how much needed often by grown-up people is this lesson! Are you a delighted guest in this bower? It was God made children innocent and happy as you see them. Are you a devoted lover? It was God made woman good and beautiful as she sits beside you. Are you for admiring heroic acts? It was He gave courage and energy to man's nature. Are you burning with the genius of art? It was He made the human mind, the human body, woods, and lakes, and mountains, and all things lovely that you see above and around you. In short, all that is grand and sublime, all that is gracious and enchanting, He made and fashioned; and can you refuse to love Him who created such things, and who has been pleased to impart to you exactly his own tastes in regard to them?

There are some persons, we are all aware, who would combat such impressions as not in visible connexion with those more lofty things which intentionally and directly engross men at the close of their career; but their rejection of them as a fitting

* St.-Sim. x. 279. † In Ps. li. ‡ Ib.

ground of piety meanwhile seems as great an infatuation as that of an actor, who would refuse to learn any thing but the last scene of the play that he was to appear in from its beginning. Such a humourist would be hissed off the stage, for inverting and confounding the piece, and putting the others out by commencing with what he had to do or utter at the end. And to some degree it is the same in life with regard to those who look on. Of course it is easier to play one scene than to support a whole character throughout; but one likes the person who, as one of the troop, achieves, however imperfectly, the latter difficult, and often painful enterprise, helping others, and keeping them together, submissive to their respective parts; while one feels but a very moderate kind of interest in the cautious and timid stipulator, who, heedless of the poet's plan, has been scornfully discarding the different exigencies of times and occasions, and reducing the drama to one monotonous act, however well he may have got up that item; keeping on with what he had himself resolved on doing from his first appearance, without a thought about what the creator of the piece, and those employed to enact it, were expecting from him; mumbling over the things that he was enjoined to speak later, and neglecting generously to bear his share of the burden which his more humble and magnanimous partners have had to sustain. In the Children's Bower men can learn to avoid such a mistake, by seeing how well and with what admirable propriety and consistency, as part of a whole, the first scenes of life can be played, even without the attention being fixed on what is to follow, though of course the whole has been a preparation for it, just as each scene from the first act of the dramatic piece, is disposed by its maker with a view to the final winding up of the whole plot at its termination.

Again, a child or young person, merely by his assiduity in saying morning and evening prayers, however short and artless, can teach us, like a St. Augustin, the necessity, the gratuity, the sweetness, and the efficacity of grace.

> "Goodness, confined within poor flesh and blood,
> Hath but a queasy and still sickly state;
> A musical hand should only play on her,
> Fluent as air, yet every touch command."

"Sanctity of our just, sanctity," continues the Père de Neuville, "weak and fragile; sanctity, tottering and inconstant. Conscience has its moments in the worst sinner; self-love has its returns in the holiest saint. The heart does not always watch; and of how many dreams and phantoms is it the sport! What we think we give to God, we are giving often to ourselves. We think we are on the road of piety, and we are off it; so that the saints think they ought to do for the imperfections of their virtues, what it might be wished sinners would do to evince sorrow for their crimes."

Again, observe how the piety of children and youth is unobtrusive, graceful, and popular. It is all done in conformity with the old-fashioned rule expressed by Petrus de Riga:—

> "Fiat in absconso quod agis coram Patre cœli,
> Ne tibi furetur gloria vana bonum *."

It is all done in a quiet, bashful, or rather unconscious way, like every thing else in which the heart is profoundly interested. "Fire, that is closest kept, burns most of all." Children can't talk piety, but they think it; and thinking is often more important than even action, though the love of deeds might make you love silence. For do you want a man not to practise what he believes? "Then encourage him," says a great observer, "to keep often speaking it in words. Every time that he speaks it, the tendency to do it will grow less. His empty speech of what he believes will be a weariness and an affliction to the wise man." The result verifies the remarks of the same great contemporary expressed elsewhere in these words:—"One of the things that strike us most throughout, in Jocelin's Chronicle, and Eadmer's Anselm, and other old monastic books, is this, that there is almost no mention whatever of personal religion in them; that the whole gist of their thinking seems to be common temporal matter. Is not this singular? A body of men, set apart for perfecting and purifying their own souls, do not seem disturbed about that in any measure. But, besides that it is easier to speak about bed and board than about ideas, may not this religious reticence, in these devout, good souls, be perhaps a merit, and sign of health in them? they

* Ap. D. Pitra Spicileg. Solesmens. t. ii. 197.

have no doubt, or even root of doubt. Religion with them is not a diseased self-introspection, an agonizing inquiry; their duties are clear to them; the way of supreme good is plain, indisputable, and they are travelling on it. Religion lies over them like an all-embracing heavenly canopy, like an atmosphere and life-element which is not spoken of, which in all things is presupposed without speech. Is not then this comparative silence of Abbot Samson, as to his religion, precisely the healthiest sign of him and of it? The unconscious is the alone complete. Abbot Samson, all along a busy working man, his religion, his worship was like his daily bread to him, which he did not take the trouble to talk much about; which he merely ate at stated intervals, and lived and did his work upon*!" Now this Catholicism of the twelfth century, as Carlyle terms it, can be learned from the youth of the bower in the nineteenth century just as well. There is no other 'ism' among them; and they speak much of secularities. "Their religion is not a horrible, restless doubt, still less a far horribler composed cant; but a great heaven,—high unquestionability, encompassing, interpenetrating the whole of life." Their reticence might recall the example of Turenne, who, even during his campaigns, used to withdraw from observation into woods, where, kneeling down on the ground, he used to adore God, in whose arm alone he trusted, even in the moment of a victory, saying, "that without God's help, there was still time enough for them to perish." The quiet, unobtrusive magnanimity of youthful piety, resembles that of Henry IV., who said on one occasion to the clergy, "My predecessors have given you words with much parade and emphasis, and I, with my gray jacket, I have only a gray jacket, will give you effects." This was the spirit of our poor Tom. Within the sphere of his power he had no fine words; but he had a heart which promised and gave deeds. In fact, Henry IV., on these occasions, was only a boy crowned; and hence, perhaps, his undying popularity. But let us take other examples. "M. de Longueville," says Madame de Sevigné, "had been to confession before setting out. As he never made a parade of any thing, he had not even been to pay his court to Madame his

* Carlyle, Past and Present.

mother. He used to make a quantity of acts of liberality and charity that no one knew of, and which he used to make only on condition that no one should speak of them." What a resemblance is there again in this portrait to our Thomas of the bower, who used never to talk about his piety or devotions, his fondness for his parents, or his affection for his family, just for the same reason that he would have never spoken of his love, disdaining to manifest by words any of his deepest emotions! He had that character which Saint-Simon ascribes to Ragotzi, "brave, fearing God without showing it, and without concealing it either,—with great simplicity *." His piety would have been that of the Duc de Beauvilliers, of whom the same author says, with a brevity of expression worthy of Tacitus, "ne montrant point sa dévotion, sans la cacher aussi †." We read of Ferdinand Egret at St. Acheul, that "he used even to conceal his virtues with as much care as others exert to disguise their vices." Emerson speaks of persons hiding virtues almost under the mask of vices, or of the semblance of them. One might imagine that the former of these youths had sat for his picture to this great artist. Instinctively he practised what Gerson recommends, saying, "Let him study to be in public common, and like every one else, however in secret he may be singularly devout to God ‡." Yet with all that assumed carelessness, levity, freedom of spirit, or what you might call the common air of lads like himself, there was a piety in his young heart which ever guided him. Grave, and very pious people would sometimes, in his presence, criticise, scrutinize, analyze, blame, and ridicule priests. But the gay, light-hearted youth would sit, on such occasions, like a Pythagorean. He would only permit himself at times timidly, as if he was affecting a right to criticise which he felt he did not possess, to remark some trait in a priest that he thought "particularly pleasing;" or he would relate, with arch humour, some trait that presented a priest in an amiable, humorous light, as in an instance I recollect, which is perhaps worth repeating, from the similarity, unknown to the young narrator, that it presented to the description of Sir Roger

* T. x. 303. † T. xi. 189.

‡ De Exercitus Discretis Devotorum Simplicium.

de Coverley's being surprised into a short nap in church. Being invited by the curé of a village in the woods, about three miles from St. Germain-en-Laye, to pass the Sunday with him, our Tom found on arriving that his own services were to be put in requisition as an acolyte. It happened to be a great day in the village, for an organ was to be "inaugurated" for the first time there. It's true there was no one to play on it excepting the good curé; but he had the gift of ubiquity for the occasion, and so could officiate at the altar, and from time to time delight the simple congregation with the unaccustomed tones of the instrument from the opposite end of the church. In the morning all passed off splendidly; but at vespers, after dinner, the weather being very sultry, the little stranger, while seated at one side of the curé, slily observed that both the boy on the other side, and the good man himself were nodding very profoundly. The latter, however, like Sir Roger, upon recovering out of his short nap, seeing the condition of the lad at one side, signified to him by a round cuff on his next ear, that he at least had no right to imitate his pastor. All which incidents the other related on his return, with as much loving admiration of his patron, as if, like Addison, he sought to interest every one in his character by a graphic account of his simplicity.

Gerson gives this charming advice, as if the chancellor of the university had lived with such youths, and had studied all his life in the bower: "Don't let the active person endeavour to have such peace and tranquillity of heart and thought as a person devoted to solitude, for in this attempt there might be pride, or a vain desire, or a grievous melancholy, or an odious sadness, displeasing to those whom he ought to please. It is sufficient if he recur to God at certain convenient hours, and conceal himself as much as he can, lest he should appear more devout than other persons with whom he has to live *."

But we said that the piety of children and youth was also popular. In this respect one might suppose children to have been the teachers of saints. Though following the most sublime paths of perfection, St. Francis of Assisi for instance, we are told, does not leave externally the common roads. He likes

* Contra Scrupulosam Conscientiam.

to be confounded with the people, by the practice of vulgar and ordinary devotion. With all his fervour and sanctity, he shows nothing of singularity, of personal ideas, or of disguised vanity; while as for his virtues, he literally knows nothing about them. The child knows enough in seizing with the popular mind, what is the general meaning of all he sees and hears in the church. He will look and sing like the rest; but if you put him to questions of erudition, like a little boy in the Prioresse tale by Chaucer, after telling you the moral of it all, he will reply,

> "I can no more expoune in this matere;
> I lerne song, I can no more gramer."

René-Marie-Albert de Jouenne d'Esgrigny had a great devotion to St. Louis of Gonzague, and all he used to say about it was, "Quand je l'invoque je sens en moi quelque chose de bon." The boyish, therefore, is not the philosophic piety, neglectful when not disdainful of all the regular common authorized devotions, while thinking it enough piety to see the sun shine. It jabbers away at its prayers without affectation or human respect. It has no dispensations, self-granted in consideration of a sense of the lofty sublimity and deep interior purity of its individual views. It does things in the regular way; the prescribed way; just as mothers and sisters do them. It follows the beaten road with the multitude of the faithful people. It has no self-sufficiency or daring, no vainglory, no intellectual bravery, no forgetfulness of our being all creatures. It realizes the wish of a great voice from the English oratory, when pointing out the propriety of acting and speaking in the exact manner that befits a creature *. And pray, O ye men of mature wisdom, what can be better than this? Think ye that there is no solid reason for recommending these devotions, for the practice of these exercises just as they are put down in the printed book and appointed for the common people? Take but one instance, glanced at in a former place. Must you not admire that tender devotion of youth to the blessed Virgin? when "that blood, made illustrious by the faith of Abraham, the obedience of Isaac, the innocence of Jacob, the modesty of Joseph, the re-

* Faber, The Creator and the Creature.

ligion of David, the wisdom of Solomon, the zeal of Josias,—that blood which has flowed in the veins of the patriarchs, pontiffs, and prophets, passing into those of Mary, became purified by the holy flame which burned in her heart, losing the corruption which remained of the corruption of human nature?"

The humility of the young, of which we shall see direct proof later, comes in like that of the plebeian class, in a general way, to temper all their devotions. In praying for the dead, for instance, they will never add words of their own to the formula, to spoil all by changing, as some do in England, what they find in the book, "that by pious supplications," into what they do not find in it,—"that by our pious supplications." Instinctively, the youth says to himself, with Gerson, "I will say these prayers ordained by the Church as if in the person of some one else, or rather of the whole Church. For I have no confidence in my own merit. I will say them merely as if required, sent, and commissioned to say them *."

In fine, from the character of the piety of the bower, we can learn that the true spirit of devotion is not only compatible with humanity and the exercise of its tenderest and warmest affections, but that where these common popular affections cannot mix with it, there is absolute proof of its being not genuine. In the admirable paper which the Duc de Saint-Simon drew up at the request of the Duc de Beauvilliers, respecting the defects in the conduct of the Duc de Bourgogne, this wise nobleman shows the necessity of the strong supporting the weak, by condescending to many things for their sake, and by being pious with sobriety, by not transferring monastic devotion to ordinary life of which the duties would be incompatible with it, by entering into common amusements, avoiding the restraints of precisions which are not virtue, but which only lead others to profound dissimulations, and to a horrible and abundant hypocrisy. He shows that piety should be conformable to the natural duties of each state; and he ends by saying, "I can affirm without temerity, that for any other piety, however perfect it would be in others, a man ought not to be without fear of having to render an account of it before God †." In another place he speaks of the

* Querela Defunctorum. † Mém. t. viii. 195—200.

wife of the Maréchal de Villeroy as being led, towards the close of her life, by a coarse-minded, hard, and ignorant director, to adopt a kind of piety so narrow and contrary to nature, and opposed to all her former manners, that, as the Duc predicted, it caused her death in two or three years*. In our times, grave people, even without being coarse-minded, seem fond of representing piety as being a thing which, to ordinary mortals, must prove fearfully repulsive. Any attempt to combine it with human enjoyments, or with the ease and freedom of common life, is traced by them to a latent hankering after an antagonistic philosophy. I believe in my conscience they'd be like Calvin, for tying a sort of symbolic rope round children's necks, in order to indicate what they think that even these innocents deserve! What a sweet mind they must have! It is not a bower mind, at all events. By such dark views, after all is said, they are only showing their own deplorable ignorance. The air of piety is ten heavens above them. The Emperor Leopold was no frivolous, light-brained fellow, like the writer of these pages—no philosopher either, or rationalist in their sense of the word. His private life was a continued exercise of religion; and yet feeling his end near, after receiving the sacraments, he asked for music, for profane music, as some would term it, which he had always delighted in; and he died listening to it.

Then in regard to natural affection, in spite of all that these people say, we find that, in point of fact, it is the most pious who are the most humane, having their affections not suppressed, but raised and solemnized. "I was recommended," says Evelyn, "to Father John, a Benedictine monk, and superior of his order for the English College of Douay, a person of singular learning, religion, and humanity †." This is the old type. The Duc de Saint-Simon, though hostile to his order, represents the Père de la Chaise as no less answering to it; he describes him as "good, just, gentle, and moderate, full of honour, probity, humanity, goodness, disinterested, quick to acknowledge his error, and ardent to repair it, tolerant without passion, and polished without servility ‡." Such is still the children's type.

* T. vi. 428. † Diary. ‡ T. vii. 46.

In times of misfortune and private mourning, who are, after all, the persons that evince most human sympathy? Is it those who talk most about philosophy and nature? No. It is religious men and women, who you fancied were like stone images to the world. Sensibility in others, let them have talked what they like, is found to be a very frail and uncertain exotic.

Upon the whole, one can learn from observing the piety of childhood and youth, that to use the words of the Père Boutauld, "it is with true devotion as with true nobility and true courage; these three have one mark to distinguish them; their common character is to have a magnanimous goodness, a sincere and disinterested inclination to give pleasure to others, and to console them in their sufferings. If this is not the character of your mind," adds this Father, "you are not a man of honour, nor a man of quality, nor a man of devotion and conscience; you are not even a Christian. People may call you what they like. God, who sees all, calls you an infidel and a reprobate *."

At last then we come to observe, in a direct way, and not alone incidentally, how all these distinctions are verified in the examples presented in the bower.

"Religion in childhood," says Bonifacius, "shows itself most bright; for it is accustomed to love and venerate all sacred things, churches, priests, altars, images, beads, festivals, and tombs. The name of sin is hateful to children. None so wish to serve the priest at mass; they know by heart the precepts of our law and the catechism. To this affinity we see witnesses in the three children in the furnace, in the twelve children martyrs in Africa, slain in one day for the faith by the Arians, and, in Spain, Justus and Pastor, who left their alphabet tables to suffer martyrdom †." These traits of youth are remarked by every one. Wordsworth even describes the impressions produced by the sight of a little chapel on a lad:

"I lighted—opened with soft touch the chapel's iron door,
Past softly, leading in the boy; and while from roof to floor,
From floor to roof all round his eyes the child with wonder cast,
Pleasure on pleasure crowded in, each livelier than the last.

* Les Conseilles de la Sagesse. † Institutio Christiani Pueri.

For deftly framed within the trunk, the sanctuary showed,
By light of lamp and precious stones, that glimmered here, there glowed
Shrine, altar, image, offerings hung in sign of gratitude;
Sight that inspired accordant thoughts."

From the piety of children and youth, who, as Theodorus says, can derive benefit from every thing *, men may learn, as Gerson recommends, to take advantage of all things that can minister to devotion, to know and to make the right use of them, whether pilgrimages or other exercises, or the sound of bells or organs, converting all such things to utility and channels of Divine inspiration †. Grown men have often the faculty to detect offence in the very things which, like the strains of Mozart, minister to the piety of ordinary mortals. Adopting some one critical, scientific, or archæological measure of their own, they are for branding with some terrible stigma whatever does not come up to it. They complain of pictures being not gothic, of music being too tender and impassioned, as if it were not well to enlist tenderness and passion on the best side. They complain always that there ought not to be allowed this or that, while differing with each other as to the comparative worth of this or that. Whereas, from the piety of children they can learn to follow the way of that happy medium which Gerson explains in his treatise on the direction of the heart, where he says of things that may or not be unfitting and superstitious, according to the intention, "We must avoid in regard to them a firm and obstinate credulity on account of the danger of error, and, on the other hand, a pertinacious and scornful dissent, as if they were altogether to be despised and reprobated. We must walk in that middle and royal way, in which is directed that devotion which we call the piety of faith, of which the property is to accept in the way of a certain probability, and love those things, whatever they may be, which seem in any mortals to nourish the Christian religion and the love of God ‡."

Wordsworth has well seized the character of that unconscious

* Theætetus. † De Mendicitate spirituali.
‡ De Directione Cordis.

mysticism which belongs to youth; and in these well-known lines describes it:

> "In such access of mind, in such high hour
> Of visitation from the living God,
> Thought was not, in enjoyment it expired.
> No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
> Rapt into still communion that transcends
> The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
> His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
> That made him; it was blessedness and love."

St. Bernardine, of Sienna, was of such sanctity as a child, that the other boys would break off conversation they felt to be unseemly when he appeared, saying, "Silence! Bernardine is coming." When Lecudon was dying at St. Acheul, one of his friends who led a life unlike his own, said that he was going to pray in a certain chapel for his recovery. "No," replied the sick boy; "but, dear friend, pray for your own conversion; that will be best for both of us." The other was struck to the heart; and subsequently he took holy orders. Eugène de Matha, aged eleven years, being in his last sickness, said, "How sad it is that I cannot hear mass on Easter Day!" "John Carette," says the writer of his life, "used to sanctify himself 'a petit bruit.'" These boys, as we before remarked, make no parade of piety. This poor eldest one, who never blasphemed Heaven, nor transgressed his parents, and who, as the child Hengo adds, "always said his prayers," is an instance. When a little boy, at Paris, he used to serve at mass as an acolyte at St. Roch, and he seemed to have quite an affection for every thing connected with that church. At vespers, on Sundays, he used to place himself close to the gates of the sanctuary, on the epistle side, where his presence seemed as much a matter of course as the curé's. Then, when he grew up, his piety was all "a petit bruit." He feared temptations, secretly tried to avoid them; wished to escape from them even by the offering of his life. He never omitted—why shrink from such puerile details now?—his boyish habit of praying morning and night upon his knees. One night, just before his illness, his brother caught him saying his chaplet, when he thought no one saw him. He cherished his medal, his scapular. He

never would go to take the recreation of the chace without hearing mass. One day, the horse he drove falling and disabling himself for ever, "Ah!" said he to his brother, who was with him, "I ought to have done what I omitted this morning!" The gay troubadour, the delight of all societies, he whose only fault was to be too impressionable to the manner of those around him,—in his lightest moments, when he even affected to talk like the people, and loved to repeat their quaint, homely, and good-humoured terms, never countenanced a word unholy or impure, or impertinent or disparaging of another. No one ever heard from his lips, what Homer would call ὑπερφίαλον ἔπος. There is one who sometimes used to regard him with secret surprise, when observing with what imperturbable respect and genuine good feeling he always spoke to priests, though there might be occasion at the moment for a little merriment at some uncalled-for and unseasonable censure by an old man and learned, a foreigner and a stranger to the ways and necessities of modern life in England.

But let us take other examples, where there was a more free and expansive development of what he possibly, though I do not think it, tried too much to conceal.

The director of Planche and of Calixte Frèze, said, "I used to regard them with a kind of admiration and respect, and I may add, confusion; for I used to envy their innocence and their fervour *." There are, in fact, examples of piety in children, "remembering their Creator in the days of their youth," that one cannot recall without a deep and affecting interest. Little John furnished one of them. "Cum adhuc esset puer cœpit quærere Deum patris sui." Without many of the resources to nourish piety which these French children possessed, he was in every respect like one of the angelic students described in the book entitled "Souvenirs de St. Acheul:"

"Thus had his moder her litel child i-taught
Our blissful lady, Cristes moder deere,
To worschip ay, and he forgat it nought,
For holy child will alway soone leere."

* Souvenirs de St. Acheul.

From his birth offered, as it were, to be a child of that blessed Mother of us all, he, though so young, to Christ did reverence, and cherished her with all the tenderness of a real son.

> "Her hymns and litanies he learnt by rote,
> And them he song both well and boldely;
> Oft on the day they passed through his throte,
> From word to word accordyng with the note."

Whether he walked, or sat, or rode,

> "This litel child as he cam to and fro,
> Ful merily than wold he synge and crie,
> 'O alma redemptoris, evermo;'
> The swetness had his herte pined so
> Of Cristes moder, that to hir to pray,
> He cannot stynt of synging by the way."

Thus along with all the buoyant sports of a strong and lively constitution, piety stamped every action of his short life. There is a person who will never forget one moment when he saw him kneeling before the altar, at the last benediction at which he ever assisted. Let us pause here a moment. What I am about to mention is interesting, at least, for its truth, and for its recalling what we read of the Emperor Maximilian, who did not dare to look at St. Lucianus, the modest piety of whose countenance and demeanour used to convert pagans. I know not whether the impression I speak of was produced by the same causes, but I am acquainted with one, who at that moment did not dare to look at this child of eight years kneeling to God, and bowed down before his altar. It was a few Sundays before his death; and it was the last time, as I have said, that he ever assisted at that beautiful office, for he was removed next day to a place where no functions besides mass were then celebrated. This person, I repeat it, beheld him with his little head bowed down, and forehead resting on the rail, so innocently, so devoutly praying, that the sight overcame him; and as if his eyes were not worthy to sustain the vision of such pure innocence, instinctively he turned aside his face, and even, if all must be known, his thoughts with it.

"O God! if souls unsoil'd as these
Need daily mercy from thy throne;
If he upon his bended knees,
Our loveliest and our purest one;
He, with a face so clear and bright
We deem him some stray child of light;
If he, with those soft eyes in tears,
Day after day in his first years,
Must kneel and pray for grace from Thee;
What far, far deeper need have we *?"

"I know a person," says Gerson, "who is accustomed to get innocent boys to pray for him †." Whether he meant himself or another, I know not; but no one need wonder at such a practice being suggested either to a saint or to a sinner. It is related of the great Alburquerque, that in a fearful storm when his fleet was in danger of perishing, he seized a child, and holding him up in his arms, presented him, as it were, to God, invoking mercy for his people. It is added, that the storm ceased, and that all present ascribed their deliverance to that action. But we must close this chapter.

"Quæ mens est hodiè, cur eadem non puero fuit ‡?"

Say rather, Would that I had still retained, or grant that I may yet recover, the mind of my youth!

CHAPTER XII.

DEN itself for sixpence to non-subscribers! Well, I never! what immortal foliage! what slopes! what flowers! and the blue winding lake or river, I know not which it is, with its wooded islands for Robinson Crusoe's ducks, and its peninsulas so beautiful with shrubs of every tint of green; and then this sudden ex-

* Willis. † De Mendicitate spirituali.
‡ Hor. Od. iv. 9.

hibition of life, in shapes to which we are unaccustomed, revealing to us the ever renewing vitality of all things; the curious birds, and the wonderful beasts; and the strange screams, and groans, and moans, and roars; and the warbling, and the singing, and the chirping, and the chattering; and the bill-rapping of such a marvellous creation, and no human creatures, I do believe, in it to-day but ourselves; and a bower in every corner; and to suit our hereditary propensities, for which mother Eve must answer, the dangerous swings and giant strides! Well, here I suppose you certainly intend to stop awhile, so I may depend on you for a long sitting.

It is amusing to remark the sort of estimate formed of children's capacities, and of the character of the youthful mind in general, by those persons who substitute book learning for common thought and personal observation of life around them. Women and children and the poor, the three divisions of the human race that Christianity had a mission to glorify, are precisely the three classes of their fellow-creatures that they secretly, at least, and practically most despise.

We have already seen enough to enable us to convict them of injustice with respect to their appreciation of children, whom they regard as only capable of being moved by toys or what they call scientific games; and we are about now to witness further proof of it; though, on the other hand, I am not going to ascribe to the young people before us any thing unsuitable to their years, or follow in that respect the example of Spenser, who, after beginning one of his pastorals with

> "Diggon Davie, I bid her good day,
> Or, Diggon her is, or I missay,"

proceeds to show these refined shepherds met together to discuss dogmatical theology, and to complain of errors in the government of the Church; for choosing which subjects, so little appropriate to his speakers, Johnson justly censures him.

"Omnia divina et humana jura," says St. Augustin, "permittunt quærere catholicam fidem." Stranger, don't look displeased. What forbids us to institute this inquiry as we sit in the Children's Bower? Men in these days are fond

enough of looking at the ancient religion of Christendom, when considering in what relation governments and anarchies, kings and ministers, philosophers and men of letters, are supposed to stand to it; and they do this, in order that they may estimate its character by what they imagine to be its influence on all these classes. Why should not others sometimes take a hint from them, and consider children in regard to it? Their affinity with it, in a countless number of instances, considering what some of our philosophers fancy it to be, is, to say the least, very remarkable. Their affection for it in almost every individual case, when it is presented to their observation, after hearing it represented as something so monstrous, deserves our notice; for, in point of fact, we find that its action upon their intelligence and hearts is like that of the material light on plants, which influences not only their colour, but determines the bending of their stems and flowers. Why should we not transfer to this order of thought the principle of the philosopher, to set out from observation, to generalize afterwards the phenomena, and erect them into law; or, the circumstances which determine a phenomenon being defined, to assign to that law all the particularities which result from it? In the world even, some have endeavoured to show, may be learned the lesson, that what many like least within this order of considerations, is really the bourn to which common thoughts would of themselves lead men. It will startle some persons, if it should turn out that in the Children's Bower we may learn that the very same thing, be it what it will, is in greatest harmony with the affections, thoughts, instincts, and natural manners of those, whom philosophers themselves profess to admire, and of whom we are expressly told by a voice which all Christians bow to, "that of such is the kingdom of heaven." This fact to them would be ten times strange; but it will be found as true as it is strange; nay, as Isabella says, "it is ten times true; for truth is truth to the end of reckoning."

But why, they will demand, drag in such a theme to so sweet and tranquil a spot? Rather than harp on that string they will say, Break up the bower, and let its members roam elsewhere. Ay, just so. They are like the old men that Plato describes, who came to interrupt the conversation with Lysis, calling to

the boys, and bidding them go home, as it was already late, to whom they were obliged to yield as "to evil spirits," to use the not very complimentary language of the party while dissolving the conference *. But in our case the answer to them who cannot as pedagogues constrain us, is ready. It is, that the phenomenon forces itself upon our attention whether we will or not, and that the theme itself does not appear to be so inevitably opposed either to sweetness or tranquillity as they seem to suppose. To speak magnificently, with a view to please those who most despise it, I would utter my apology in the words of Cicero, and hoping to propitiate their fastidious ears, would say, "If I were induced by any ostentation, or through the desire of contending, to apply myself to this philosophy, I should think not only my folly, but also my manners and my nature, ought to be despised. For if pertinacity is blamable in the least things, it can never be well to contend with others pugnaciously about the greatest. But I can swear that I am actuated by the ardour of loving truth, and that what I think I say. I am not one of those who direct their thoughts to any little cynosure of private or local interest, but I seek to direct them to those vast and illustrious regions in which the minds of men of all nations can wander without satiety or restraint from human laws." Nevertheless, I fully understand that however fine all this may sound, it will not serve my turn with every one. Some will insist that I have no right to introduce such a subject here before children, and that it is taking themselves by surprise. I am certainly aware that it is too elevated a theme, not for the young to hear about, but for me under any circumstances to discuss formally; but, my wise visitor, as for your being taken by surprise, I beg to hold myself excused. Have you never heard of strange fowl lighting upon waters that are distant from their own? The nature for which you profess such an esteem is always laying traps for you, or taking you, as you say, by surprise.

The simplicity and innocence of young people, in the first place, dispose them naturally to the love and reception of all moral truth, and, without meaning any offence, this is a disposition which some grown-up men might do well to learn from

* Lysis.

them. In the world the soil is not exactly so favourable. If you would hear the fact plainly delivered, the long and short of it there is, "Truth's a dog that must to kennel!" "Believe me," says Gerson, writing to certain learned men, and alluding to their state of mind, "truth is most bitter, and to none more so than to men of letters who are wise in their own eyes, with whom all charitative admonition or fraternal correction passes for a contumelious injury to be indignantly resented*." "O miseriam," exclaims Picus of Mirandula, "dubio procul singularem! liberum hominis animum ad expeditam contemplandæ veritatis actionem editum, nec cœlo nec ulla re creata contentum, in unius opinionis ergastulo tanquam manicis et compedibus vinctum detineri†." What the young deem reason, mature manhood will often consider nonsense, for as old Mirabel says, "Though you should reason like an angel, if you argue yourself out of a good estate you talk like a fool." Besides, though you may convince the reason of grown men that you're in the right, yet there is an old attendant of their years, called positiveness, which neither you nor all the wits of the world will ever be able to shake. But truth has more than mortal enemies to fear; and really I think there is no shutting one's eyes to the evidence which proves that it has. How else can you account for the prodigious things that are often uttered by sincere well-meaning philosophers against what others, and some of the best and wisest, regard as vital truth? Take the case of a man who has embraced that high religious or moral truth which causes, we are told, the enmity of an unseen spiritual foe; then that terrible foe will humble him, as the Psalmist says, "to make him fall into his snare." "He will humble the faithful," adds St. Augustin, "and make them feel humbled and in humiliation, and so, like antichrist, will hope to draw them, by the shame and fear of contempt, into his own service‡." Childhood and youth know not of such fear; they can't understand how it should ever be entertained. They escape, therefore, these precipices; and grown-up men can learn, from seeing the happiness of their

* Epist. ad Stud. Nav.

† Exam. Van. Doctrinæ Gentium, &c.

‡ In Ps. ix.

exemption, to avoid them too. To the child, whether boy or girl, each of them can say,

> "I know thy spirit calm, and true, and bold;
> I've watch'd thy lightest hours,
> And seen thee, in the wildest flush of youth,
> Touch'd with the instinct ravishment of truth *."

Childhood, comparatively harmonious with nature, has in consequence an affinity with that aggregate, call it what you will, which, in comprising all truth and rejecting no part of it, agrees with the same original nature towards which the young of human kind feel drawn; for, as Cicero says, whose words are especially applicable to man in the purest state of his intelligence, which is that of his early years, "Nothing is sweeter to man than the light of truth †." And that man, however fallen, loves this original nature, is expressed no less strongly by the same philosopher in the words, which a child may use in reference to his catechism, "Gaudeo nostra jura ad naturam accommodari, majorumque sapientia admodum delector ‡."

Childhood and youth, then, catching authentic whispers of truth and beauty, and accepting what the common nature of man accepts as harmonious with itself, find in themselves an affinity with what is most salient in the ancient Christianity, which, as Villemain remarks, "has profound relations, both in its belief and in its forms, with the intimate nature of man §." This affinity can be developed in their elders, if they will only copy them in that docility, the results of which may be expressed in these noble lines of our old poet—

> "Take heed of lies. Truth, though it trouble some minds,
> Some wicked minds, that are both dark and dangerous,
> Yet it preserves itself, comes off pure, innocent,
> And, like the sun, though never so eclips'd,
> Must break in glory."

That common nature, then, in the first instance, we may remark, accepts what many grown-up men think so monstrous,

* Willis. † Academ. lib. ii. ‡ De Legibus ii.
§ Rapports académiques, 1854.

namely, confession. How do we know that it accepts it? By experience—

> "——— for always blessings crown that posture;
> Nature inclines, and half-way meets that duty,
> Stooping to raise from earth the filial reverence."

The Gentiles practised self-examination. Cato would recall every evening what he had said during the day. Seneca tells us that he measures over each day the words and deeds of the day. Tacitus, rhetorically enough, says that he daily seeks to weed out some of his faults or errors; and even the poet says,

> "Judex ipse sui totum se explorat ad unguem."

The Christian exercise, when not abused, as bodily remedies are abused by those morbidly delicate persons who take them without cause every day, recommends itself to human reason. The Pagan philosophers of Athens and Alexandria prescribed and enjoined an analogous practice, as in the Gorgias and the Book of Virtue by Plutarch. The Jews did the same. Childhood and youth accordingly find nothing easier than compliance with this discipline, which even criminals have resorted to spontaneously, without knowing any thing about its being a religious duty. Men should follow the young therefore in this respect, if they only wish to conform to what the best and wisest, as well as the most contrite men of all ages have conceived to be fitting and desirable. So much for that matter, beginning, as you see we do, like Aristotle, with the *φαινόμενα*—that which strikes the eye first. Again, are there men who object to prayer for the dead—another thing that strikes every one's attention when hearing of the ancient system of belief?—they might learn from children to practise it in accordance with the natural propensity of the human mind, and even in conformity with the admission of those who condemned that article; for their second chief said, "Puto apostolos quibusdam indulsisse pro mortuis orare." The logic of the bower will add, What does it serve our brethren to know what they expect from us, if among those who know it there is no more help extended to them than among those who know it not? Let our conduct in praying for the dead correspond with our faith. "One speaks," says the

Père de Neuville, "of durable unions. Be not deceived. Man does not know himself when he thinks he is capable, by nature alone, of an eternal attachment. He has not sufficient force to resist the activity of time,—of that time which penetrates by degrees into the deepest recesses of the heart, to consume in it the bonds of which it has formed the tissue,—of that time which sooner or later takes from us what it has given us, and which produces no less changes within than without us. The moments of separation are very sad; but by dint of flowing, tears are exhausted; one is consoled without wishing to be so, without perceiving it; the soul, wearied and worn down with grief, opens itself insensibly to ideas less sombre and sweeter. Oh, let us give what is of more value than tears—let us give them prayer!"

Then, again, please to observe that the mysteries, the facts of life, which strike more the youthful than the mature mind, are best met by the ancient Christian doctrines; and the young instinctively feel that they are best met by them. From their impressions, therefore, in this respect, another important lesson is furnished to maturity. The impenetrable phenomena of our existence verify these doctrines, and correspond almost visibly with them. Youth, indeed, from not having had time to discover with Plato that each individual has an enemy within himself*, cannot appreciate the whole of this proof philosophically; but it instinctively and gradually accepts the old exposition of the causes and effects that surround them. To innocence, I admit, is shut out one whole order of proofs in regard to this subject. A man who has greatly transgressed has in his own conscience and memory the strongest evidence and most intellectual certainty, added to that which others possess, respecting the truth of the ancient religion in regard to morals. He knows as a fact, not as a doctrine, the consequences which it teaches to be the result of offences,—the darkening of the intellect by transgression, the growing dislike which it entails of priests and holy things, and of faith itself, as well as of the conscience to which it is addressed. Above all, he knows the misery that follows, even in this life, in the loss that ensues of joy, of peace, of taste,

* De Leg. i.

of every thing intellectually good. No child or youth can conceive the clearness and force of these proofs, because all such persons want the personal experience which yields them; but the child and the youth are drawn on by a general affinity to credit what that positive religion teaches with respect to the consequences of transgression; and it is that willingness to take its teaching on credit which their elders should learn to adopt from them, without waiting for the proofs yielded to others by bitter personal experience. The young seem of themselves apt to echo the sentence of the Timæus, that "we are plants not of earth but heaven;" consequently, in regard to the discipline of life, they are Christians of the old stock, and they can teach us to accept even what is austere in their belief, in accordance after all with nature and the common lot of men; for as a quaint English writer says, whose words may include more than one profession, "the soldier hath more fasts and vigils in his almanack than the Roman Church did ever enjoy."

Again, in the Children's Bower can be learned what may be described as constituting Catholicity in regard to virtues; and, depend upon it, though it's using a phrase opposed to its philosophy, you could not make choice of a better shape to dress your mind in. "Luxury renders the manners of youth," as Plato says, "morose and irascible, and vehemently agitated by trifles, whereas an excessive rustic austerity causes them to be abject and illiberal, and man-haters, and unfitting associates *." The old discipline involved the happy medium which recommends itself to the judgment of the young. Would you see what that concrete amounts to when beheld in its fullest development in maturity and power? witness the character of St. Louis. "Among his evangelical virtues," as the Père de Neuville says, "no one quality was established on the ruins of another. Self-control did not diminish charity, nor the love of retreat, active zeal. Humility, which fled from praise, did not suppress the piety which shows itself for the edification of others; firmness against abuses went together with tenderness for men in calamity; fervour neglected nothing, exaggerated nothing, and was as far from giving too much as too little. The

* De Leg. vii.

severity of these virtues took nothing from the agreeableness of sweet and sociable manners, nor delicacy of conscience from the graces of his mind. This penitent is the tenderest of sons, fathers, brothers, and friends. This contemplative sage is full of noble simplicity, of amiable freedom, of charming conversation, of gentle manners. The duties of religion are fulfilled with those of reason, and the decorum of sanctity is allied with that of the highest social elevation*." Some of the virtues enumerated in this passage are such, of course, as pass beyond the sphere of the young; but to children, too, as well as to St. Louis, and, before him, to David, is granted a certain universality or comprehensiveness of heart,—"Dat Deus latitudinem cordis." And, as we already remarked, they have the secret of being able to reconcile and combine all virtues belonging to their years, which conduces to form another feature of their character, which all grown-up persons would do well to imitate.

From children, again, can be learned the great lesson of union; by sympathy, by giving and taking, by love, by inseparable dependence on one another, and by collective dependence on the Divine Will,—of that "unity of membership" leading to a peace which recalls life in Paradise; for, as St. Augustin says, "nihil aliud est Paradisus quam pax sine fine†." Their innocence necessarily favours both unity and peace; for "sin divides hearts," says St. Augustin, "but one faith reunites them‡." Pride in particular, from which malady children and youth are most free, causes a separation of hearts. Were all men like children in respect to humility, innocence, and harmony with nature's laws, we may be sure that no one would have to inquire what religion reigned over the world. If left to himself no child or youth could imagine that you can believe one way in London and another in Rome; no young person could comprehend the meaning of a national as opposed to a universal religion. The young who, like our John and Thomas, seem to echo the old poet, saying, as Plato tells us,

"Happy the man who has a foreign guest,"

can discern what is amiable in foreigners as soon as they can

* Père de Neuville. † De Civ. Dei xix. ‡ In Ps lxxiv.

read it in the faces of their own countrymen; and the idea of having a different faith from them, as well as a different language, would seem horrible, and a proof that no religion was true. Grown-up people, as politicians, at least, have few such difficulties; as patriots of a certain class still less are they affected by them. "Great obstacles," says Gerson, "are certain affected partialities and antipathies in regard to nations, accepting some and despising others; for thus it is that men cannot walk in the house of the Lord with consent by the road of truth and charity, which ought to be common and pacific to all alike, whether stranger or familiar*." Youth can teach much by the fact of its responding to a religion that offers truth to all alike, not as depending on sense, but on a common, universal, Divine authority, which, as Picus of Mirandula says, "it has not to go in search of, begging here and there through streets and courts, at the lecture-rooms of talkative philosophers, but which is there present, on whatever part of the globe you find yourself, where is no contention, no bitter controversy, no distracting discussions, where is no persuasion, no opinion, but faith; and, from faith, peace which the world cannot give. From opinion," adds this Christian philosopher, "proceeds strife, and tumult, and bewildering argumentation, and, what is a woe peculiar to the human race, contest for thoughts. Other animals fight for things tangible and needful for the body, man alone fights with his fellow-creatures on account of thinking differently†." As it is, however varied in dispositions and ability, we all need the same assistance, and the same remedies for the things that divide us. There are of course shades of difference between us, without evil marks, which is an order of things much pleasanter and better than if we had been "all of us alike, and only numbered on our foreheads that we might be known one from the other‡." Each, indeed, has his own little private character sweetly engraven on him by our common Parent, but for all that, when not perverted systematically by principles that contradict nature, we are all in essential respects the very image of one another. There are thoughts, imagina-

* Epist. ad eosdem Student. Coll. Navarræ.
† Lib. v. perorat. ‡ Ruskin.

tions, and feelings common to us all, which no language can seize to express them, and which, like some wild quaint tones in our popular childish airs, some of which I durst not name through fear of fastidious ears, prove, by the pleasure they inspire in every one who is not a bunch of affectation, that we are all made of the same stuff, composed of the same wires and chords, and of the same mysterious essence working in them, that defies analysis. To use the words of a philosopher, "One is not so like to one, so equal, as we are all between ourselves. If depravity of custom, if the variety of opinions, did not bend and warp the imbecility of minds, no one would be so like himself as all would be like all. Therefore, whatever is the definition of man holds in respect to all. For reason, by which we excel brutes, is certainly common to all, differing in learning, though equal in regard to the faculty of learning; for the senses move in the same way all alike; and similarly those impressions of the mind, which are the foundations of intelligence, exist in all. Nor is there any race which cannot arrive at virtue. Nor alone in right things, but also in what is evil does the similitude of the human race exist. We are all taken by pleasure, though this has a certain affinity with good; and similarly we all avoid the same things, and are attracted by the same things. What nation is there that does not love gentleness, and benignity, and gratitude; and that does not hate the proud, the malignant, the cruel, the ungrateful*?"

The grown-up world, notwithstanding this similitude between its members, is ever ripe for divisions and separations; but they who sit in this bower and imbibe its spirit, will never follow it in this direction. Some of them may be easily seen through as wild and frail creatures, but they will never cause a diminution of the joy of any community that receives augmentation by their being received into it, through a restless itching to fall into parties, by troubling its peace or questioning its judgments. With all their faults, it is not they who will ever, if they can help it, sow disunion among brethren. From childhood and youth men can learn, therefore, the beauty and happiness resulting from the bond of fellowship which unites hearts, and

* Cicero, de Legibus i.

without interfering with their variety—minds; and so may they be prepared for embracing that religious and only durable union which secures it against all the passions and circumstances of this short and distracted life.

Another lesson, though closely connected with the last, that can be obtained in the bower by grown-up people, is that which teaches the excellence of submitting to authority in certain relations; and, above all, in religion "ne asymboli ab hominum consortio maneant," as Picus of Mirandula says. "It is safer to navigate than to swim," says an old writer alluding to the bark of Peter; "safer to be steered by experienced sailors than to be abandoned solitary amidst the rocks and the waves." It is more comfortable to be governed by something than to be left to "a general gray twilight, looming with shapes of expediencies, parliamentary traditions, and leading articles." This assuredly is a very important, though also a very obvious, lesson; for a child or young person in his senses can never accept religion on any other terms but on authority; and we are told "quisquis non receperit regnum Dei velut parvulus, non intrabit illud." Whatever may be thought of the boy bishop, it is pretty clear that it would be well for the man bishop if his subjects would take a lesson from the Children's Bower, and feel that authority only conspires with their reason and the mystic element of their souls to keep them in the way of truth. There no one, even in regard to the government of the Christian society, will think himself wiser, and more prudent, and more disinterested, and more forethoughtful than his spiritual superiors; there what they sanction will be accepted, and only what they condemn, rejected. What would become of children if they, at least, did not possess this element of moral life, of reason, and of happiness? "They do possess it, divinely delivered," as a philosopher says, "in the doctrines of faith, confirmed not by any splendour of words or links of syllogisms, but as becomes a judge, without argumentation, briefly and nakedly promulgated*." What does maturity often invoke and substitute? We can find the reply in Tacitus: "Speciosa

* Pic. Mir. Exam. Van. Doct. Gentium et Verit. Christianæ Discip. i. 20.

verbis, re inania, aut subdola; quantoque majore libertatis imagine tegebantur tanto eruptura ad infensius servitium *." Indeed, what childhood gains in this respect from its docility, furnishes such a contrast to the consequences arising from the fancied liberty and emancipation of its elders, that even poets, struck by it, are heard exclaiming,

> " ——————— the human being
> May not be trusted to self-government.
> The clear and written law, the deep-trod foot-marks
> Of ancient custom, are all necessary
> To keep him in the road of faith and duty †."

Children are governed by custom, resulting from authority, which, as we have heard, is an element of reason and of faith, and therein both men and nations may desire to imitate them. St. Chrysostom says, "that the enslaved are governed by laws, and free men by custom;" and, in fact, as Goldsmith observes, "Custom partakes of the nature of parental injunction; the simplicity, conciseness, and antiquity of custom, inspire veneration."

The manner in which children, too, submit to every legitimate custom and authority, might be held up to men for imitation; for, as the Roman lawyers say, "Non omnium, quæ majoribus constituta sunt, ratio reddi potest, et ideo rationes eorum quæ constituuntur inquiri non oportet, alioquin multa ex his quæ certa sunt subvertuntur." From children can be learned the excellence of that authoritative custom which, without being felt or even perceived, unites hearts, and keeps them in order, in constancy, and unity of faith. Men can be struck with this phenomenon, and thence led to consider how, as St. Leo says, "soliditas illius fidei quæ in apostolorum principe est laudata, perpetua est; et sicut permanet quod in Christo Petrus credidit, ita permanet quod in Petro Christus instituit."

But here are many opposing voices from those advanced in years, shouting out, "Tu discipulus ejus sis." "There is no benediction," says Gerson, "more desirable than this malediction."

* Ann. i. † Coleridge, "Wallenstein."

That it is only fit for women and children is an old accusation brought against the religion of St. Augustin and of Bossuet. Grown-up people are pleased to regard women and children as mere frivolous creatures, and consequently they think them disposed to what they themselves think frivolous. But they might learn from Shakspeare's Duke to advance the charge with less confidence.

> "For, boy, however they do praise themselves,
> Their fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
> More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn,
> Than women's are," or children's.

These grave mature characters, as they are termed, that cannot choose a coloured cloth without having a statute to authorize them, and who all the while profess to be for freedom in matters of religion, might do well to contrast the consistency of those whom they desert with the fickleness of their own notions, ever uncertain, notwithstanding judicial decisions and establishments, appeals from courts below to courts above, though perhaps we should read them in an inverse order, when every thing is left to fluctuate but the principle that a bishop's consent matters nothing where the law and the parliament have pronounced. If fashion in other things changes to their disgust, it is the lesser blot wisdom finds for children to change their toys and women their shapes, than men their minds. What do they not change in regard to their mind's form while occupied with confirming every thing else? "I would have men of such constancy put to sea," some one says, "that their business might be every thing, and their interest every where; for that's it that always makes a good voyage of nothing."

In the absence of faith, in the old Christian sense, men of genius will try, with an impassioned energy, to satisfy themselves with some theory respecting either history, or architecture, or painting, which they will fortify not only with genius, but also by availing themselves of all helps from a truth that they refuse to admit, and by principles taken up with unscrupulous disregard as to the right of property. They will have a faith truly noble in a human way that can remove mountains; but it will be in a man, or in stones, or in a particular century, or in a

vague future. Whether they really satisfy themselves to the end is a question which must be left to time and to themselves to decide; but one thing is quite clear, that children and the young, and the vast majority of mankind, cannot be satisfied with such theories as an ultimate object, or made to accept them as an adequate compensation for the loss of faith in the commonly received organized provision for the spiritual wants of the human mind.

Children please God by simplicity and love; men seem often to think that religion consists in searching out mysteries. "But," says Gerson, "you can estimate their error by observing what takes place in a family. A father has two sons. One of them knows nothing of his father's secrets, but only that he is his father, and that he has every thing he possesses from him, and he loves and honours him. The other son knows many of his father's secrets, and he knows how to speak magnificently about them, and yet he shows no tender love for him, and no obedience to him. I ask you which of these two sons will his father love best? No doubt, the first*."

But if men are to learn the principle of authority and custom from children, they must distinguish what is required by the difference of their years, and carefully attend to the source from which that authority and custom, to which they subject themselves, are derived. They cannot, like children, confide in an individual, whom even children are soon obliged to scan if he comes to them propounding novelties; neither can they trust to an epoch or to a local custom. "The principal instruction," says St. Augustin, "that I have learned in the Catholic Church, is not to put my hope in any man, or in any age. What use is it to discuss the life of Augustin the bishop? what has that to do with the cause†?" "Those who, arrogating a personal illumination by the Holy Ghost, set at nought the authority of the Universal Church, were objects from the second century of the anathemas of Christianity‡." What men have to submit to is that constant, universal, and legitimate promulgation, of which the ancients say, "Totum culmen auctoritatis, lumenque ra-

* De Monte Contemplationis, cap. 7. † In Ps. xxxvi.
‡ Cruice, l'Hist. de l'Egl. 244.

tionis in illo uno salutari nomine Jesu Christo atque in unâ ejus Ecclesiâ, recreando atque reformando humano generi constitutum est." Every where else even children are separated and divided in matters of religion, all being led from their peaceful bower to different places of worship—if to any place of worship at all—which are set up literally in opposition to each other. "Nothing could have fallen out more unlucky," says Tillotson, "than that there should be such differences among them about that which they pretend to be the only means of ending differences." But, wherever that old authority is dominant, children and the young are united with each other and with their elders, and thus all go one way. The natural and obvious inference is, that these so united are on the right road; and as this leads but to one centre of unity, we may conclude by saying in the old Latin, in order not to shock the stranger too much by giving it in the vernacular, "Non credatur veram fidem tenere Catholicam qui fidem non doceat esse servandum Romanam."

From childhood and youth, again, may be learned love and respect for the material temple, and for all that belongs to it, as to the offices and festivals of religion. Children, like women and the common people, in unhappy times have often been brought up to abhor what they felt constrained to admire when in its presence. How should they curse what God hath not cursed? By what means should they detest what the Lord detesteth not? Their innocent voices sound on such occasions like the sublime exclamations of the prophet, "How beautiful are thy tabernacles, O Jacob, and thy tents, O Israel! As woody valleys, as watered gardens near the rivers, as tabernacles which the Lord hath pitched, as cedars by the water side!"

Grown-up men, aspiring to intellectual eminence over the multitude, are often like that Victorinus, who thought he could be a Christian without going to the church. "You know I am a Christian," he used to say secretly to his friend; but when the other said, "I shan't consider you such till I see you in the church," he used to laugh, and say, "Do walls make Christians?" for he feared, adds St. Augustin, to offend his friends, who were proud worshippers of demons, whose hatred, from the height of their Babylonic dignity, as if from the cedars of Lebanon, which the Lord had not broken, he thought would rush upon him if he

were seen in the church bodily. Children instinctively feel like his wiser friend, and will refuse to believe that a man can belong to a religion of which he neglects to frequent the accredited temple. It may be all very fine and imposing to talk of classical and philosophic studies at home, and of urgent affairs within the domestic walls or elsewhere; but if the man is never seen in the church like other people, the young will know well enough that it is not his example that they or others have to follow; and perhaps it will be no small service rendered to their elders, if they can be instrumental in leading them to draw with charity a similar conclusion.

"Sunday," as Addison says, "clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in our minds the notions of religion, but as it puts both sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities as are apt to give us a figure in the eye of the street." This, perhaps, you will think a small matter; and who knows but you may feel like Pepys, when he went to the Queen's chapel at Christmas, and wrote afterwards in his Diary, "Lord! what an odd thing it was for me to be in a crowd of people, here a footman, there a beggar, here a fine lady, there a zealous poor papist." But the young look upon all this with very different eyes. Who shall describe the angelic pleasure that children receive from going to the church in simple innocence, undistinguished with the common throng!—where the apprentice kneels so humbly with the old mechanic, as if neither had ever laboured in their minds till now,—where the aged woman, audibly invoking a blessing on every young head around her, sits by the side of the timid maiden, trying to hide her tears under her book,—where the child walks to his seat, like our little John, with a gait combining a sense of business and reverence—a certain half-ironical "cum dignitate" air, that must make the angels smile. There amidst the crowd are the joined rough brown palms you see in Spanish paintings, which almost cause wonder that hands can be so coarse, and thoughts so tender; there the meditative countenances, the beaming looks, that inspired the masters of the early Italian school; there the devices of bashful youth, seeking to conceal the emotions which cause its poor nerves to tremble, and which make the tears gush from your eyes when you see

them in the churches of London. In this love for the assemblies of the faithful, the young furnish us thus with another lesson; for if we are to practise things, we must cultivate an affection for them. It is the child above all who sings from the bottom of his heart with David, saying, "Lætatus sum in his quæ dicta sunt mihi: in domum Domini ibimus." It is little John, who, like his eldest brother, when he was of his age, will say in his own way,

"O sweeter than the marriage feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the church
With a goodly company!

"To walk together to the church,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!"

From the love evinced by children for the old sacred hymns, men may learn, without possessing even any knowledge of those hymns themselves, to enter into their spirit, and comprehend the mystic beauty of the Divine temple. Without being able to clothe his thoughts in words, the child has in his mind a fixed and general idea, which might be expressed in the lines,

"Hæc domus ritè Deo dedicata
Noscitur, in quâ populus sacratum
Corpus assumit, bibit et beatum
Sanguinis haustum.

"Hic sacrosancti latices veternas
Diluunt culpas, perimuntque noxas,
Chrismate vero genus et creatur
Christicolarum.

"Hic salus ægris, medicina fessis,
Lumen orbatis, veniaque nostris
Fertur offensis, timor atque mæror
Pellitur omnis.

"Hic locus nempè vocitatur aula
Regis æterni, niveaque cœli
Porta, quæ sanctos patriam petentes
Accipit omnes *."

From children can be learnt a respectful love for the offices, forms, symbols, tones, and the very language of ancient Christianity, which all are so instituted as to touch some chord in the human heart, as may be witnessed in men outwardly at least strangers to its pale. When the poet Longfellow seeks to express the fears of nature at the thought of the Eternal Judge, he finds no words so apt as those of the ritual, with which, accordingly, he concludes his poem, saying,

"Kyrie eleison!
Christe eleison!"

And even Wordsworth says,

"I know not how the right may be,
But I have oft had joy to see
By play of chance my road beside
The cross on which the Saviour died."

We need not add with what delighted ears and eyes children hear and see all that the Church presents to their senses, while responding, as they so intensely do, to the words, "Collaudetur, crucifixus tollens mundi scelera." The young can give a reason for each item of it. They seem instinctively to know, for instance, that, as an old homily of the Church of Florence says, "when we celebrate devoutly the birthday of the saints, to the honour of Christ, whose precepts we follow,—non eis gaudia, vel honorem augemus, sed nosmetipsos adjuvamus†." Propose the most ingenious objection of the sceptic, the child is beforehand with him, and only laughs when he hears it. No man who had ever been, I do not say a graduate, but a welcome visitor to the Children's Bower, would discourse seriously about religious festivals in the style of many of the present day, who,

* Old hymn for the dedication of a church.
† Lamius, S. Eccles. Florentinæ Monumenta, tom. iii.

like the correspondent of the chief literary journal of England, writing from Capri, will sometimes express their chagrin at witnessing these innocent anniversaries, to show homage, be it observed, both to God and to the truest human worth and greatness, using terms of spite, which are worth learning by heart to serve as pastime for the gay, if the delusions of others can ever make men gay. "I have literally laboured," says this intelligent traveller, "to flee from the religious fêtes in this country. Whither can I fly? How can I procure some cessation from this long-protracted agony? The summer heat develops them. Figures of St. Antonio are dangling from ropes suspended across every street in Naples. At Sorrento what was my dismay as I entered the village to find the long street festooned with evergreens in honour of the Madonna. Flying to Capri, I there found the fête of St. Dominico; rebounding again, I fell upon the fête of St. Anna. Nor did my woes end there. Returning to Naples, I found another fête to celebrate the praises of St. Gætano, who had delivered their ancestors from the plague some two hundred years ago. Where or how to get relief from these religious demonstrations is more than I can tell. I pass to what is interesting. How are the grapes?"

From children, again, can be learnt a love for what is popular and simple, or, as we might say, childlike, in the ancient religion of Christendom. The popular character of Christianity formed an obstacle to the conversion of philosophers in the first ages. Lactantius, in order to meet the difficulty, says, "I have wished to join wisdom with religion, that the knowledge of literature may not only hurt not religion and justice, but conduce to both. We must not despair. Perhaps we do not sing to the deaf; for things are not in such an evil state that there are no sound minds to whom truth is pleasant. Only let the cup be lined with the honey of celestial wisdom, that the bitter remedies may be drunk without offence. For what keeps the learned, and wise, and the great from us is the simple popular style in which religion addresses itself to the multitude." This was a difficulty of which no trace can be discovered here. Children and youth are essentially popular in their nature; the old Christianity is, in consequence, eminently adapted to win them; and I confess I do not envy the mental state of that man who does not wish

develop in himself the same affinity. The very faults of one who is popular in his ways of thinking and acting seem to me often preferable to the virtues of a man who aspires to the opposite character. There is authority for this preference too. "It is not only those to whom solid and learned things are preached," says St. Augustin, "who form the Church. These are the perfect; and if it were only composed of the perfect, what would become of the rest of men? But God has had regard to the human weakness, in wishing that those who are not capable of comprehending spiritual and eternal things should be nevertheless nourished with faith in all that has been done for our salvation, from the patriarchs and prophets to the incarnation. Whoever simply believes in this economy finds his salvation by submitting to such an authority and so running with the saints*." "The one only hope left to man," says Lactantius, "is placed in this doctrine which we defend. All the wisdom of man is in this one thing, that he should know and worship God. Whoever wishes to be wise and happy must hear the voice of God, must learn justice, despise comparatively human, accept Divine things, in order that he may attain to that supreme good for which he was born." You see, then, how well children and the young, like the lower orders, are treated by the ancient Christianity. No hard impossible task is prescribed for them; they have no fancy for the like of that; they love easy lessons, and they find them here.

But, moreover, that religion in one sense may be termed not alone popular, but even childlike. You need not look so maliciously pleased or so blankly astonished, grave strangers. It is the children who should look astonished when you think to palm yourself off for a more intellectual Christian than all others, because you have a sour look, a stately deportment, a pompous pronunciation, words that break our jaws to get out, a head filled with Greek and Hebrew, and a heart full of disdain for those who do not know or talk as much as yourself. Christianity was childlike from the first. What do you think of strewing the ground with branches, and seeking to make the shadow of St. Peter fall on the sick? What do you think of its

* In Ps. viii.

paintings, and the sculptures in the catacombs, in the absides of the basilicas, to remind men in such a babyish way through their eyes of the power of Christ over us, on the sides of the churches, for confirming faith through the same sense, and instructing in this puerile way the beholders? Was it not childlike in the forms and symbols used in the cemeteries and sepulchral vaults as a profession of belief in the resurrection, which the Father designates as folly to the world*? Christianity in its old form is childlike, full of affinities with childhood, in its love of symbolic pictures, affectionate hymns, simple airs, lights, perfumes, striking ceremonies and processions, which, as a great author says expressly, "are all radiant with a strong, childlike light of imagination." Children, therefore, love it even naturally for the same reason that it is as naturally and as necessarily despised and loathed by the proud, who have nothing childlike in their minds. How many by observing these things can find instruction and the true life here!

Again, in the Children's Bower can be learnt esteem and respect for the kind of virtues which belong, in a more especial manner, to the faithful of the ancient universal Church.

What these virtues are, perhaps can best be estimated by a recollection of childhood, where they were unknown. Oh! think not that all these beautiful flowers of the bower are the mere result of the energies of nature. When I look at the angelic character of little John, and at the noble probity and manners and mind of his brother, there is another childhood and youth that some one can look back upon, only to awaken contrasts that are any thing but pleasant, only to feel assured that roses can be grafted on a bramble,—that sons, whatever Homer thought, may be far better than their fathers,—as much above them as heaven is above earth, of worth as unlike their own, as there is difference of value between corn and the chaff that the wind scattereth.

"O heavens, what some men do,
While some men leave to do!"

Any thing, of course, I know may be blamed, if you set your-

* Macario, Hagioglypta, 197.

self to collect faults; but compare the life of faith in children, and the ways corresponding with the life that wants faith. Compare with each other the manners that ensue, and then judge! If you want to express the difference in theological language, there is nothing readier. "The old man gave way to the demon; the new man," says St. Augustin, "does so no more *."

But some of the worst men, you will say, perhaps, are of this religion. This has been always remarked. "You see among Christians," says that holy doctor, "a robber, for iniquity such as you had never seen before. Be it so; but you see also men prodigal of their own souls, such as you had never seen before. Praise the winepress then, since you see there accomplished the words of the Apocalypse. 'Let the just become juster still; and let him who is vile become viler still †.'" But persons of this faith, you will add, are the same, at least, as others; all are gone astray in this generation alike. "Seek," he says, "among the chaff, and you will find an earnest and solid people, in the midst of whom you will praise God. Do you wish to find such persons? Be of their number; for if you do not resemble them, it will be very hard for you not to believe that all others are the same as yourself ‡." Children possess this secret clue, and they find the just; they live with the just; they believe in the multitude of the just. Take children to any place sanctified by the former residence of saints; take them to that fountain of the Salvian waters, where St. Paul was beheaded; or to that spring of St. Francis, on the ascent of Mount Alvernia, from which used to drink that seraphic Father, and his companions; from which drank St. Anthony of Padua, St. Bonaventura, St. Bernardine, and the five martyrs of Morocco; and you will soon see, while grown-up people with the philosopher turn or stare vacantly, with what interest they will lift its water to their lips. It is the same when you bring them into the presence of the living. Children and young people do not find these Christians of the old school to be such persons as those, of whom Saint-Simon

* In Ps. xxv. † In Ps. lxxx.

‡ In Ps. xxxiv.

says, "that they have such a gift of displeasing and of alienating others from them, that as soon as ever they open their lips, one feels dying to say no to them." Their impression respecting them is exactly the contrary.

You perceive, then, what sort of lesson in this respect you can derive in the bower; how you may learn by marking the love and respect which is felt there for the great and good, to feel in your own breast, too, for them love and respect, and to identify the cause which is dear to them with their greatness and goodness. This is a great point gained. You have been in habits of looking at the ancient Church as represented by the ambitious, by corporate aggregations, by the powerful, by the self-interested, by the designing, by the implacable, by the despotic. You learn now to look at it with children's eyes, to see it as represented by the humble, by the isolated, by the weak, by the generous, by the simple, by the merciful, by the free, and the lovers of freedom. It is not those whom children love, that make religion a stepping-stone for pride, a source of disparagement, an instrument of oppression, an artifice of policy, an excuse for vengeance, a power with which to enslave the world. The affections of the child can thus open the eyes of the man, changing his antipathy to admiration, and transforming what he deemed a legitimate distrust of the false and hypocritical professions of the base and falsely eminent, into a reckless defiance of the woe pronounced against those who shall scandalize one of the least of the little ones of Christ.

There is, again, another great lesson on this subject to be learned in the bower, which consists in imparting to us what may be called the mystic or intuitive sense of the truth of the ancient Christian religion, which sense children seem peculiarly to possess, and which it is often left for the fell serjeant death to convey to others.

Childhood and death are two great teachers. Childhood has an instinct of Christianity, as it was understood for sixteen hundred years, an intuitive sense of its truth; and those who die, and those who witness death, are often after a very long sleep awakened to the same sense of its reality.

The natural side of the phenomena of childish intuitions is wonderful enough. The young seem to be able to distinguis'

right and wrong, as men with a genius for painting are able to tell a good picture by a side glance, as they pass along a gallery; but what may be termed the supernatural side, whereby they can distinguish things divinely revealed and instituted, from those that are constituted by men under mere human impressions, is more astonishing still. Of the former, a poet says,

> "But, what a mystery—this erring mind!
> It wakes within a frame of various powers,
> A stranger in a new and wondrous world.
> It brings an instinct from some other sphere,
> For its five senses are familiar all,
> And, with th' unconscious habit of a dream,
> It calls, and they obey: the priceless sight
> Springs to its curious organ, and the ear
> Learns strangely to detect th' articulate air
> In its unseen divisions, and the tongue
> Gets its miraculous lesson with the rest;
> And in the midst of an obedient throng
> Of well-trained ministers, the mind goes forth
> To search the secrets of a new-found home.
> Its infancy is full of hope and joy.
> Knowledge is sweet, and nature is a nurse
> Gentle and holy; and the light and air,
> And all things common, warm it like the sun,
> And ripen the eternal seed within.
> And so its youth glides on; and still it seems
> A heavenward spirit, straying oftentimes,
> But never widely; and if death might come
> And ravish it from earth, as it is now,
> We could almost believe that it would mount
> Spotless and radiant from the very grave.
> But manhood comes, and in its bosom sits
> Another spirit *."

Children are often the best recipients and exponents of mystical theology, because they possess it experimentally, according to the way of true wisdom. "If," says Gerson, "philosophy be all science that proceeds from experiment, mystical theology

* Willis.

will be true philosophy; and those versed in it, however simple, may be rightly named philosophers; and that children are to be classed with them, appears from the words of Christ, 'revelasti ea parvulis;' and from those of Solomon, 'sapientia parvulis locuta est;' and from those of David, 'lex Dei parvulis dat intellectum *.'" The intellectual and moral adaptations of childhood to the doctrines of faith have always struck with more or less astonishment those commissioned to instruct it. "I have been long occupied with the subject of mystic theology," some one used to say, as Gerson reports. "For forty years I have been conversant with it, studying, turning over and over many things in mind, reading, praying, and meditating at great leisure; and I have found nothing more compendious and efficacious for the attainment of mystic theology, than for the spirit and soul to make themselves, under God, just like a little boy or little girl; for God Himself was a boy; 'puer natus est nobis, et parvulus datus est nobis †.'" Gerson, citing these words, refers to his own treatise on Spiritual Mendicity, in proof of the assertion. Even material poverty furnishing occasion for its triumphs is gracious in youth; but that which is spiritual shows it truly worthy of love, and this may be learned from it. From its insight so artlessly expressed, though so impenetrable in its origin, men may be moved to require infinity in thoughts, in books, in pictures; they may be moved to think of prayer, to have faith in the invisible, to love the invisible; to estimate the value of the soul, to dread a sentence of reprobation, and to act through the desire of glorifying God and of winning heaven. All that is Christian in the old sense in faith, and philosophy, and discipline, and manners, appearing to have a mysterious affinity with the young, men of mature age can learn from them to regard with awe and veneration doctrines and practices which seem doubly revealed to the most innocent of the human race; and which, when slighted by themselves, are often as mysteriously disclosed in all their power and majesty by the great teacher death when he approaches them, either with personal menaces, or to exhibit

* De Mystica Theologia Speculativa, iii.

† Gerson, De Mystica Theologia, ix.

himself to them while attacking others who are objects of their love.

In fine, men can learn in the Children's Bower to cherish with affection and respect the ideal of those ancient Christian times, to which even the light literature intended for the amusement of the young is obliged to recur, in order to find themes congenial with their disposition, and corresponding in general with the natural current of their thoughts. I do not mean that this lesson would lead to any exaggerated or exclusive admiration for the mediæval period, but that it would deliver men from the mistakes too often made by those who misrepresent and malign generations, that with all their faults, were in mind, at least, eminently Christian.

Children and young people can, in general, understand the motives and principles which animated the ancient Christian world, better than those which, in some places, are often substituted for them in modern times. For instance, they can enter into the views which prompted all the religious foundations and institutions of the primitive and mediæval times. When you read to them any of the old charters beginning with such words as these, "While the term of life is uncertain, and since there can be no doubt but that if living in the service of Christ we contribute any part of our property to a holy purpose, we shall receive in this world an hundredfold, and in the next life eternal goods *;" when, I say, such passages are read to them, if they have had a Christian mother, they recognize their own motives, their own belief; they see men acting from views that are to themselves familiar and comprehensible. So also, a Duc de Beauvilliers, persisting in a dangerous position, and accounting for it by saying, that he did not wish to do the least thing which might give him a scruple at his death †; or a Chamillart paying 20,000 livres out of his own pocket, for which he had to fetter himself and borrow, in order to indemnify a party who had lost their cause through his own oversight in not having read a document which would have established the claim against which he had decided ‡, are personages and

* Lamius, Sanctæ Eccles. Florentinæ Monumenta, tom. i. 521.

† Saint-Simon, ii. 124. ‡ ii. 315.

characters that they can feel allied with. But all that you offer to read to them about the ages of scrip will sound like a dead language and an unknown tongue. The mere fact, noticed by Villemain, of an oppressed philosopher, Bœtius, of a generous and free mind, victim of a judicial iniquity, having filled with his renown the whole period of the middle ages, will seem to the young as significative of the presence of a noble spirit which must be respected, they will think, even by those who have lost the sentiment of liberty *. Similarly, they can understand the motives even of many of the mediæval wars, just as they can comprehend the ancient Greeks contending as at Tanagra and at Coronea, when, as Plato says, a question relating to justice and injustice caused the deaths and battles †. But their facility, perhaps, would not be so great, if the ground of many of our recent wars were to be understood and defended by them; and that embarrassment, too, would arise, not from the complication of grounds, but rather from the extreme simplicity of the principle which leads to them, which seen in its nakedness will seem to them, without their having read Plato, to admit of small excuse. Children and youths cannot, indeed, be expected to remind you of such historical proofs of the benign sway of the ancient Church, and of the example which its legislation set of mildness, as are afforded in old archives. They may know nothing about serfs or Colliberts preferring her domination to that of the laity, or of their applying to justice to prove, by what was called the judgment of God,—sometimes even, poor creatures! by the duel,—that they belonged to a monastery, rather than to a secular lord, and of their even giving their goods to obtain this change of masters ‡. Such documents, of course, are altogether beyond their reach. Neither can they be expected to know from such researches as De Tocqueville publishes, that down even to the Revolution the clergy of France showed themselves the enemies of despotism, and as favourable to civil liberty as the tiers état, or the noblesse; that in the political order they called for every reform which would now be thought desirable; that

* Choix d'Études sur la Litt. contemp. † Alcibiad.

‡ Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes, tom. ii. 409.

in the provincial assemblies they were the members who were most enlightened, most active, and most liberal*. Investigations of this kind are not within the province of the young; but they will find in their own little childish books innumerable traits of benignity in men, who were the ministers and representatives of religion under the old form. Spite and calumny, we know, unfortunately, can be foisted with or without conscience into "child's own books," in reference even to sports and natural history; for what cannot ingenuity distort into crimes when it has a mind to accuse? but language can't be altered to suit such views; the meaning of English words will be asked by children; and that meaning will sometimes constrain unwilling lips to utter truth. The old ecclesiastical monuments, too, around them have a voice that is not lost upon young ears, which can often catch with precision harmonies that have been long unheard by older people, though a few men of genius and singular ability may have been attempting to recover them, as in that beautiful passage, where Ruskin describes the old tower of Calais Church. "For instance, I cannot find words," he says, "to express the intense pleasure I have always in first finding myself, after some prolonged stay in England, at the foot of the old tower of Calais Church. The large neglect, the noble unsightliness of it; the record of its years written so visibly, yet without sign of weakness or decay; its stern wasteness and gloom, eaten away by the Channel winds, and overgrown with the bitter sea-grasses; its slates and tiles all shaken and rent, and yet not falling; its desert of brickwork full of bolts, and holes, and ugly fissures, and yet strong, like a bare brown rock; its carelessness of what any one thinks or feels about it, putting forth no claim, having no beauty nor desirableness, pride nor grace; yet neither asking for pity; not, as ruins are, useless and piteous, feebly or fondly garrulous of better days; but useful still, going through its own daily work, as some old fisherman beaten gray by storm, yet drawing his daily nets: so it stands, with no complaint about its past youth, in blanched and meagre massiveness and serviceableness, gathering human souls together underneath it; the sound of

* L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution.

its bells for prayer still rolling through its rents, and the gray peak of it seen far across the sea, principal of the three that rise above the waste of surfy sand and hillocked shore,—the lighthouse for life, and the belfry for labour, and this for patience and praise *."

The child's idea of life in old Christian times, may not be always ready for development by his words; but while "veterum volvens monumenta virorum" he will naturally fall into a train of thinking and conversation like that of Madame Chardon at the great portal of Notre Dame, at Paris. She and her husband were Huguenots, and strict in their religion. One morning stopping in their coach near the Hôtel Dieu, waiting for an answer which their laquais was a long time in bringing, she turned her eyes by chance on the great gates of the church of Our Lady, and by degrees fell into a sort of reverie, or rather, as the Duc de Saint-Simon, who relates the anecdote, says, a meditation. Her husband after a time, wondering at her fixed looks, asked her what she was thinking about. She pointed to the statues of saints round the door, and bid him observe how old they were, which showed that Luther and Calvin's doctrine about saints and images was a novelty, as other tenets of theirs might prove. She added that this fact gave her doubts about those other points of their religion; and in fine she said she was resolved to inquire into it. Chardon replied that she would do well, and that he would do the same thing; and that very day they began to seek for the truth. In the course of the year, after being secretly instructed, they both made their abjuration †. Young people in England will naturally fall into the same train of reflections when similar objects are presented, and they will agree with what a recent traveller says on beholding the monumental remains of our past generations, that "evidently there has been great power of sentiment at work in this island, of which these cathedrals and churches are the proofs, as volcanic basalts show the work of fire which has been extinguished for ages, that England must have felt the full heat of the Christianity which fermented Europe. The power, in fact, of the religious sentiment, put an end to human sacrifices

* Ruskin.

† Mém. tom. iv. 347.

checked appetite, inspired the crusades, inspired resistance to tyrants, inspired self-respect, set bounds to serfdom and slavery, founded liberty, created the religious architecture. The Catholic Church, thrown on this toiling, serious people, has made, in fourteen centuries, a massive system, close fitted to the manners and genius of the country. In this long time it has blended with every thing in heaven above and the earth beneath. It moves through a zodiac of feasts and fasts, names every day of the year, every town and market, and headland, and monument." For the spirit and manners of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, indeed, if exhibited before them under the title of the Ancien Régime, young people cannot be expected to manifest any great spontaneous sympathy, most things of Christian antiquity that please their imagination having then perished, as may be seen proved in the recent work of M. de Tocqueville *. But boys and girls who read at all, will entertain, in spite of you, an admiration for many things that while peculiarly mediæval, are in some respects connected with the ancient religion of Christendom, with the eternal laws of right, of human greatness, heroism, and worth. They will love the memory of the paladin and the red-cross knight, and the hosts that went, not to revenge injuries, but to recover the holy sepulchre; they will love the memory of the pilgrim of St. James, with the vast hostels provided for him, from the eleventh century, placed as they used to be often in the midst of forests, more like monasteries than inns, as that in the forest of Teupasci, in Tuscany †; they will venerate and admire the monasteries themselves, situated in vast woods, to which travellers wending their way would be followed by wolves, as when Salvator de Corzano had some wild, disreputable companions of this kind, when he was proceeding by night to Mount Alvernia ‡. They will admire, because leading to acts that they can comprehend, the beauty of that devotion of those ages to an idea, to a spiritual object. They will understand what a living author so admires in the character of every great Venetian before the fifteenth century,—"the habit of assigning to religion

* L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution.

† Lamius, S. Ecclesiæ Florentinæ Monumenta, tom. ii. 1152.

‡ Vital, Chronica Montis Alvernæ, 208.

a direct influence over all his own actions, and all the affairs of his own life." They will feel at once the connexion between such a spirit and the prosperity of the whole state. They will not be apt to slight the memory of that priest they read about in the poem that used so greatly to delight our little John, of whom 'tis said,

"To Dryburgh the way he has ta'en,
And there to say mass
Till three days do pass,
For the soul of a knight that is slain."

I do not think it would be an exaggeration of youthful reverence for names of ancient or mediæval celebrity to say, that such writers as Charles Lamb only seem to borrow from it when, in allusion to "Him of Aquinam," they are found begging for a copy of his works to be given back to them, and saying, "Oh, the glorious old schoolmen! There must be something in them. Such great names imply greatness *."

They will unconsciously adopt the true opinion, even in regard to political science, borne out by history. They will like the idea of the local liberties, and the varieties resulting from them; they will be more struck by institutions than by expedients; they will never be distinguished for sympathy with a spirit that could give "Geneva a theocrat in place of its ancient franchises, Germany a line of arrogant petty princes in place of her ancient constitution, and to England a despotism over soul and body, which never before had a parallel." They will be apt to believe that England herself must have been happy under such a king as the Confessor, and France under the empire of a St. Louis, when such was the state of things in the latter country, that a republic could not have been more free, and a people subject to despotic power more submissive; —and they will gradually lead men who observe their innocent enthusiasm to think and speak more justly of the past, more in accordance with a belief in the truth of the religion that inspired it, and to agree with those who say that "each age brings with it its own manner of thinking; that the ages which will follow us will not respect some of our ideas more than we

* Final Memorials of Lamb, p. 220.

respect the ages which have preceded us, and that it will be well for us to entertain for our ancestors an indulgence, of which we shall have only too great need from our posterity." That the children's view of past times, however taken up, is nearer to the truth, historically speaking, than that of many able and learned writers who represent those ages in exclusively dark colours, will be the conviction established by subsequent study, but with which of course we have no concern here. To glance however at one instance, and borrow the language of the Père de Neuville: "Look at the facts in the reign of St. Louis. I see battles gained and enemies humbled. What more could have been done by a warlike king? I see glory sacrificed to the repose of the people. What more could have been accomplished by a pacific prince? I see successful diplomacy. What more could have been achieved by a politic sovereign? The arts in honour, sciences cultivated, talents recompensed. What more by a philosophic ruler? Exact and precise laws and administrators. What more by a crowned legislator? Commerce flourishing, innocence safe, vice intimidated. What more by the virtuous chief of a republic? Neighbouring nations appealing to him in their disputes. What more by a Solomon? This warrior is a man of peace and gentleness; this lover of peace is dreaded; this politician is a man of simplicity; this lover of the arts is a man of prayer and austerity; this legislator is a man of equity; this general arbitrator, a man of humility, devoted to the happiness of his own nation." "I began the study of the ancient society," says De Tocqueville, in his recent work, "full of prejudices against it; I finished full of respect for it*." You see then, if you will attach credit to any testimony, that the young people's instinctive admiration, and what the old French writers would call their raisonnettes, did not lead you so astray, even in regard to a vulnerable side of the ancient Christian civilization, which was still resisted by many barbaric elements. And if you take into account religious considerations, which after all that we can say, are of more importance than any results affecting civil and temporal matters, or conclusions merely historical, political, or literary, you will

* L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution, 198.

find still greater reason to feel gratitude for your little guides who so artlessly and so safely lead you. With breathless attention you will then hear, to the justice of the children's view of past ages, the attestations of the wise and thoughtful, who, turning from the brilliant but shallow declamations of the modern historians, politicians, and parliamentary talkers, will say with one who witnessed their first success, without perceiving what good Providence effected for the present and future period of the world, by means of their foolish will which anticipated it not, "Allow me to confess, gentlemen, I see what we have lost for heaven by this revolution of ideas and sentiments. I do not see what we have gained for the earth. I do not see with what moral virtue the place of the evangelical virtues has been supplied, nor what can console me as a citizen, for what I regret as a Christian. When there will be fewer saints in the country, will there be more great men? Do we perceive that in proportion as faith disappears, equity, gravity, and the study of law attains to greater perfection in the sanctuary of justice? application, capacity, disinterestedness, and the avoidance of luxury in the military state? modesty, decorum, affection in the bosom of families? the love of the people in those who preside over the public fortune? We ridicule the simplicity of the people in the times of St. Louis. I admit they had only the talents of probity, truth, courage, disinterestedness, magnanimity, cordiality, love of religion and of fatherland. We have the talents of speculation, of discussion, of system, that of thinking with finesse, of expressing ourselves with grace, of disputing, of reasoning, of subtilizing in every thing, and of despising every thing excepting our own age and our personal merit *."

Moved by such convictions, men in later life will sometimes even go beyond what the thoughts of children would suggest. They will deny the natural, ancient, and Christian notion of the progressive improvement of mankind, which, as Villemain remarks, dates in the West from St. Ambrose, St. Augustin, and Salvian,—St. Ambrose, in his reply to Symmachus, having said that the human race attains to more perfection by degrees,

* De Neuville.

as the universe arose out of chaos, and that it is even the progress of social life which leads man towards a purer religion. They will affect incredulity respecting such hopes, denounce their own age, write, as Lamb humorously says, "for antiquity," or, like those described by Tacitus, they will, while extolling ancient things, be indifferent to what is recent, and, from wanting the juvenile freedom and the natural equipoise of judgment which belongs to the young, will fancy that past times alone are entitled to respect, like Evelyn advising a friend to cite Socrates Scholasticus rather than Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World, "who was but of yesterday;" or like the friend of Emerson, of whom he says, "The old times of England impress him much; he reads little now but Acta Sanctorum. He finds all English history therein. The Acta Sanctorum show plainly that the men of those times believed in God, and in the immortality of the soul, as their abbeys and cathedrals testify,—now all is gone!"—concluding thus, with rash and immoderate opinions, like many other grown-up learned men, who deal in exaggerations implying consequences affecting those with whom we live, of which children and youth would be never guilty; for they resemble those great characters that, while connected by a thousand ties with the past, evince sympathy for modern ideas, and an interest in the progress of their own times. Moved by what is ancient, and filled with admiration for what is new, they are always living in their own age, and gathering instruction out of their own age, like the greatest men, whether poets, or artists, or historians, who all of them, as an eminent author remarks, in the instances of Dante, Chaucer, Masaccio, and Tintoret, regardless of minor errors of every kind, are "getting always vital truth out of the vital present;" while, in regard to things Divine, they find verified the remark of Pascal, that "the true religion is such, that the state in which it is actually at any time is sufficient to prove its truth *."

Aristotle says that when men think of the past they look to the earth; when of the future, to the sky. Youth may have its little archæologians, who like to creep below ruins, and grub in the ground, stooping over it to find what is bygone; but its

* Pensées.

eyes are generally not downwards cast: they are directed upwards. They find raking in the past beneath their feet to be but poor work after all. They look at the sky; they gaze at its glorious colours, at its openings into infinity; and men can learn from this custom of the bower to hail and cling to that truth which speaks most of the future, and of which the chief attraction is the hope that it holds out to them of obtaining at last what alone can satisfy the human heart,—the eternal felicity of heaven.

But we must close this chapter, lest truth, tired with iteration, should find no cause to thank us. One suggestion more, and it shall end.

In no country does the transition from youth to maturity produce such abrupt and disagreeable contrasts as in one where the spirit of society is at greatest variance with the ancient religion of Christendom. Now, there's a fact for you. In such a land every stranger is enchanted with the countenances of children and young people up to fifteen or even twenty years of age, while feeling a totally different impression from observing those of persons more advanced in years, who, to their boast that they will tell us wonders, deserve to hear only Jaquenetta's answer,—"With that face?" Elia himself had thought of this when he exclaimed, upon seeing the Eton boys at play, "What a pity to think that these fine ingenuous lads in a few years will all be changed into frivolous members of Parliament!" A man must be without the sense of beauty and of the ludicrous who has not often been struck with this fact, however it may impress him. Is it that the natural affinity between youth and truth explains the expression of the former, so full of sweetness, symmetry, and repose, as you meet them in the streets and highways hourly, outreaching all efforts of conception as all power of realization, were it Raffaelle's three times over? And is it that the artificial, antagonistic, and discordant elements, to which men yield in later life, have produced the latter, containing "so many broad indications of evil, which the bluntest feeling may perceive," as pride, disdain of what is below them, avarice, luxury, profaneness, brutality? The contrasts between what is seen in the bower and what is witnessed in the hall, cannot, as we might show, for many reasons, be

referred to physical causes, for such things are powerless in moulding the corporeal expression of mental character; but lest we should seem in our turn to exaggerate any thing, and as you may not be willing to hear me while I give a guess, it must be left to others to draw whatever conclusions on this point they may think fit and legitimate. It is probable that, if they refuse to adopt the young for guides in respect to the present lesson, it will not be from a wish to retain in manhood the charming expression of youthful purity, docility, or the aspect of that childlike tenderness and simplicity, which Frederick Schlegel says he has always considered "as the original characteristic of the human race." It is certain that it will not be from having a mind well informed as to the means of cultivating those qualities themselves, and of combining them with those that can belong to later life, of which the traces suggestive of the Adamite fall can proclaim at the same time that "the renewing of our nature in the divinity of Christ is a nobler condition than that of Paradise *."

CHAPTER XIII.

HE sea-shore has its bowers as the garden hath, and here is one of them. It is very wrong, no doubt, but I own that I have more sadness than delight in beholding this part of creation. It is said that the mediævals had a peculiar dislike for it. So far, at least, I am one of them. Without having been ever shipwrecked and nearly drowned, like Ulysses, though often in younger days, as indeed, for that matter, I might sometimes wish still to be, beaten about in it, the wide expanse of the "fruitless and devouring sea," while I am sitting on the beach without any other object in view, to my eyes looks desolate.

* Ruskin.

"For by this werke, southe, northe, este, ne west
Ther nis i fostred man, ne brid, ne best.
It doth no good, to my wit, but anoyeth."

Plato thinks that for his happy state to be eight miles from the sea is nearer than is becoming. Besides, the sea stops you. It becomes, as it were, a chain to your feet; and therefore the same philosopher says elsewhere that Neptune, Poseidon, is called, as ruler of the sea, the foot-chainer*. However, that we may not be left without any thing to recall more agreeable sites, between the crevices of these cliffs grow pale plants and things of bluish hue, samphire and sea-holly, with others that in such a place may pass for flowers. There's only chalk and flint to nourish them, so one must not be too hard and critical, as if we were "leden by rivers and by welles, and eke in other places delitables." The day being bright, we can be contented with this cave, though no grass invites us to recline within, and no shade without it from tree or shrub breaks the monotonous glare of the barren tract before us. These air-bladders which cause explosions at every step you take, these sea-laces or sea-whips, however ready to young people's hands, as you may feel to your cost—these sea-tangles or sea-girdles, with these horny pouches, purses of the skate, which many mistake for a sea-weed, look very uncouth things after our inland haunts; nor are these "sea-crows," or whatever else you call them, as pleasant company as our thrushes and nightingales. There seems danger also here of having to listen to men brought up among sailors, as Socrates says, though I believe that even then the sweet speech of the children would enable us to wash out, as it were, the brackish taste. However, I see you have brought a nosegay with you of real inland flowers from the garden. Come, let us divide it, and begin by inhaling its fragrance; for I foresee that we cannot dispense in this chapter with the loveliness and charms of creation, from which evil in every shape would always separate us.

Pity and affection were really the thoughts uppermost when the plan of this whole book was first conceived. It would be a cruel result of malignant influences if in any part of it there

* Cratylus.

should seem to be employed thoughts or even words emanating from a different source. In what is now to follow lies the danger, if it exist at all; "for," as the Père de Neuville said in his oration on the prince of the apostles, "there are men amongst us who will think said against themselves whatever you say for St. Peter, and who will construe an attempt to explain the adorable views of Divine wisdom in the plan and government of his Church into a satire which offends charity."

Nevertheless I hope to get through this pass unscathed; for we are not going to attack men in nominal categories, though we cannot avoid observing certain characteristics in some few individuals, which are opposed to the instincts, intuitions, and views of childhood and youth. We may attribute, sine ira et studio, to individuals errors and faults; but it is not our intention to impute any thing even to them. The lessons of the bower here are potent, for a just cause is ever strong; and, besides, St. Augustin left an example that should be followed by every one on this side: for though one may not exactly, like him, have any superiority of genius to conceal, one may have to hide the force obtained from truth with as much care as one teaches the truth to opponents, in order that they may have the glory of appearing to be not so much brought back to unity as induced of their own accord to return to it. Persons that are sick you love better than when you saw them in good health, and the more grave becomes their malady the more you love them, almost sighing out your heart for their recovery. Persons who with all their graces are intellectually and religiously indisposed ought to be regarded simply in the same manner with tenderness. They need sharp physic; but you should love them more dearly even than others who, in those relations being in robust health, need not your sympathy.

Moreover, in the present work, the danger of mere wanton offence against charity and good humour is peculiarly lessened; for the presence of these children and young people, with such sweet smiling faces, the memory of little John and of his warm-hearted, chivalrous brother, both of them incapable of harbouring an ill-natured thought, would alone render pedantical harshness and severity on account of religious differences, in regard to any of our fellow-creatures, quite impossible. These

sons of faith loved all, welcomed all as friends, ignoring, as we before observed of others, in a way of their own, unknown to their elders, all the separations which can be ascribed to birth and circumstances, while using some "holy and religious finesse" to the end of winning them to truth. The spirit of boyhood as in our Thomas was like the religious policy of Henry IV., tolerant, not indifferent, zealous, but with equity. Besides, this eldest of the lads,

"Of modest wisdom and pacific truth,"

with the quick instinct and close observation of his age, could discern in those who for the time were going a different way from himself in such matters, "strong minds, brilliant genius, warm hearts, and great practical sagacity and experience." He could only see those truths which they believed in, while mixed up with errors which passed over his head without his notice; he believed rightly in the good will of all. Without having ever read the Meno, he seemed to discover that in a man who is ignorant there exist true opinions concerning those very things of which he is ignorant. He observed only the element of truth, which was, as Brownson so well shows, what, in fact, attracted them amidst their false theories. What was true and manly in them he admired; and in most cases he found them do and say nothing but what he himself would do and say. He found that what they loved he loved, and that what they rejected was something they ought to reject with himself, while they erroneously imputed it to others. That thing, whatever it was, they might deride as long as they liked, as far as he felt himself, and what he loved, concerned. He had not the fear or doubt which accompanies and often produces intolerance. He even thought it precious and instructive to observe in many points the happy and necessary inconsistency of such persons, and to watch on the spot, as a great academician says, their ingenuous imagination contravening their system, and the salutary force of truth leading them back constantly to the great principles which they had either forgotten or disguised. Their whole conduct seemed to him a fine protestation of human sensibility against the excesses and dangers of that spirit

system which caused them to accept a different name and position from his own.

Moreover, independent of these examples and general lessons which we derive from the bower, there is another cause more personal still why we need not fear succumbing to that ill-natured severity, which, without having any other end in view but its own gratification, is so apt to grow up with all discussions of a certain kind. "Nemo cum lacrymis injuriam vel calumniam facit," said St. Anthony to St. Paul the hermit; or, as the poet says, "Scorn and derision never come in tears." This whole book, conned with cruel pain, if the truth were known, however we may naturally seek to disguise it, is written with a film of tears, or, to speak still more accurately, without maiming the justice of my inference, as Dante says of himself on one occasion, while writing it, as snow that melts and distils away,

> "Like a fire-wasted taper, thus was I,
> Without a sigh, or tear, consumed in heart."

There will be no great offence, therefore, I trust, given.

Proceeding, then, with an observation of the impressions respecting religious differences produced by familiarity with the Children's Bower, the first lesson which we have to remark in this chapter as furnished in it, consists in the dislike which it is apt to generate for disagreement, dissension, division, and discord, for all the works of separation and disunion opposed to the charity and unity of faith.

The atmosphere of the bower, uncongenial with the mind of men who will not in general receive the kingdom of God as little children, totally unfits us for opposing union in accordance with the protests of those who reject and overthrow it; whose variation of opinion is usually progressive, as a philologist remarks, in this order: "Disagreement, or the cessation of acquiescence; dissension, or a contrariety of sentiment; division, or a separation of conduct; and discord, or an alienation of affection" — when they pass strangely by their former friends, as if they were forgot, and lay negligent and loose regard upon them, as if unworthy of applausive eyes. A result more opposed to the influence and teaching of the bower than

what then takes place cannot possibly be imagined; for the consequences may be described in the words of the old poet, Drummond of Hawthornden:

> "Religion, faith, pretending to make known,
> All have all faith, religion quite o'erthrown!"

Now if this were all, this would be more than enough to render the influence of such an opposition a thing to be deplored and abhorred; for, as the wise Duc de Saint-Simon says, "all parties, whether in the Church or in the state, are detestable *." It interferes with loving one another and feeling comfortable in one another's company. It makes men doubt about who are members of Jesus Christ. The "évangile médité" becomes an obsolete book. They don't know whether the love of God obliges them to love in a supernatural as well as in a human way those they see in the street. Loving them, perhaps, they can't help as soon as they look at their faces; but instead of being conscious of the generous, and full, and comprehensive fervour of Christian charity, they have misgivings and suspicions about their being themselves influenced solely by a mere natural, and unauthorized, and unsanctified benevolence, for which they are likely to be called one day to an account. Pretty results of reforming Christianity!

Marino Cavalli, in 1560, the Venetian ambassador at Constantinople, writing home in his despatches, said, "Five times a day the Turks pray for the division of Christians. Even in the markets, before beginning any trading, they make public prayer that Christians may be disunited more and more." This is not exactly the prayer offered in the bower of Christian youth, where foreigners of all nations as well as countrymen of every class receive so cordial a greeting, for an example of which tendency in the youthful mind we need look no farther than to little John and his tall brother, both of whom so thoroughly felt at home with visitors of every kind, come from what neighbourhood or distant land they might. To nourish a prejudice against the natives of other countries on religious grounds would be naturally repugnant, almost inconceivable, to

* T. ix. 357.

youth; and in this respect the wisdom of its twofold views of unity seems to be daily verified; for only look outside the bower,—

"Scinditur incertum studia in contraria vulgus."

The innocent flock is scattered through the strife of the shepherds, between whom, as Picus of Mirandula says of the old philosophers, there is "nulla pax, nulla consensio," but only the gathering of parties, as of nations at war; driving them some one way and some another, following broken, scattered rays of truth without being able to trace them to the luminous centre whence they all emanate. Our sceptics, accordingly, will now act like Nero, attending to the doctors of wisdom after banquets "ut contraria adseverantium discordiæ cernerentur*." If Picus of Mirandula lived in these times, he would hardly have been able, as when writing formerly, to show, while pointing out the immense debt of gratitude that we owe to Christ, that, as one ground of it, we are delivered from the contentions of the philosophers, and from the uncertainty and darkness of the Gentiles†. He would hardly have been able, as a contrast, to point at the state of religion around him, and say, "In unum autem eximia concordia convenit nostrorum multitudo theologorum, in sacris litteris omnino concors, in ecclesiæ præceptis admittendis obsequens, una pollens fide, una communi spe freta, una caritate suffulta‡." He might have found an image of what ensued, even amidst the lovers of separation themselves, in those slaty coherents, composed of so many elements imperfectly united, of the inferior ridges of the Alps, described with such astonishing accuracy by a great descriptive painter of our time, as employed to form those landscapes, of which the purpose appears to be to impress us with a sense of horror, as a foil to neighbouring scenes of extreme beauty—types of all that is most painful to the human mind—"vast wastes, breaking into black banks of shattered slate, snow-water oozing through them, and spreading itself in creeping stains among their dust; ever

* Ann. xiv.

† Examen Veritatis Doctrinæ Gentium et Veritatis Christianæ Disciplinæ, lib. i. cap. 8.

‡ Lib. i. 20.

and anon a shaking here and there, and a handful or two of their particles or flakes trembling down, one sees not why, into more total dissolution, leaving a few jagged teeth, like the edges of knives eaten away by vinegar, projecting through the half-dislodged mass from the inner rock, keen enough to cut the hand or foot that rests on them, yet crumbling as they wound, and soon sinking again into the smooth, slippery, glutinous heap, sloping away into foul ravines, where the winds howl and wander continually, and the snow lies in wasted and sorrowful fields*." These grown-up people, these governments, these philosophers, these rational Christians, no sooner give up the unity of belief to which children naturally tend, than we behold them the sport of the inconstancy and mobility of their fallible reason, less coherent than these slates of the mountain, and seemingly involved in the same necessity of continual dissolution, not knowing exactly what they think, or what they ought to think, more variable than the weather in England, passing from one doctrine to another, from opinions to opinions, from systems to systems, agreeing only in hostility to the central truth, with a fiery hate which has the power of welding them together as hot iron for that one purpose. They know the doctrine they reject, that is, they know it by some nickname, but they hardly know what it is they follow, call it what they will. They are not what the majority of Christians are; their own statistical tables prove that; but what are they? No one knows. Like the disciples of Aristotle, their best friends cannot tell you what the master teaches. They do not know it themselves. Ask them; they cannot, at least twice running in the same words, tell you what they are. But they are Englishmen, Swiss, Germans, and they believe with their respective nations! We, as vulgar, mistake all things, they will tell us; they have, intellectually as well as geographically, their point of union. Yes; but, as Leontes replies, "The centre is not big enough to bear a schoolboy's top." Otherwise, how should they be so perplexed? St. Augustin witnessed results somewhat similar, and thus describes them: "They will say, It is only Africa that remains to Christ; and when we remind them of 'the

* Ruskin.

great assembly' spoken of, they will reply, What think you of our Church? Is it not a great assembly? What think you of our great city of Bazai, and of that other so splendid of Tamugade? They would go on to tell you that Numidia alone is that great assembly spoken of in the Psalms*. When you remind them," he continues, "of the Psalm that says all parts of the world will turn to the Lord, and the bounds of the world, they reply that they have the bounds of the world in Mauritania; but when it is added, 'all the extremities of the world,' what can they say then? Let them not heed the discourse of an impostor, but believe that all nations have turned in unity to the Lord†." All these divisions emanate from the notion of the mature mind respecting some imagined necessity, unknown to youth, for removing some supposed scandals from the house of God by this or that kind of novel preaching, while taking no account of previous and legitimate provisions for a just reform. It is not the work of boys and youths, but of "grave men and conscientious men, of searchers into obscurity and futurity, who, if they commit an error, do so with a great deal of consideration and discretion and caution," while calling every thing in question. When they set up for prophets, it is not to tell us that to-morrow knaves will thrive through craft, and fools through fortune, and that honesty will go as it did, frost-nipped in a summer suit. They are truth, and their tongue has been taught a new trick. "So we find some," says Gerson, "who impugn the primacy of the Roman see, arguing that salvation can be without that; impugning ecclesiastical endowments because they are poison to the Church; impugning the outward dignity and position of prelates, because liable to be taken away by secular violence; impugning the religious orders as contrary to the liberty of the law of Christ; impugning all authority on the ground of domination with mortal sin being unjust; so, to attack evil manners, they adopt errors, and to correct abuses they condemn uses, like those foolish physicians who kill the subject while endeavouring to expel the disease‡." "A tendency to dismember and separate every thing is one of the eminent conditions," says

* In Ps. xxi. † In Ps. xxi. et xxii.

‡ De Consolatione Theologiæ, T. i. P. lib. iii.

a great writer, "of a mind leaning to vice and ugliness; just as to connect and harmonize every thing is that of a mind leaning to virtue and beauty." "I believe," he says elsewhere, "that the root of almost every schism and heresy from which the Christian Church has ever suffered, has been the effort of men to earn rather than to receive their salvation." Whereas, now, from children and youth men might learn, in a safe, common-sense kind of way, to let God work for them and to be thankful.

Moreover, these divisions arise in general from a notion which grown-up and self-opiniated persons are liable to contract respecting the superior knowledge, virtue, and justice of those who make them in succession; for the age of ambition is the age that loves to depreciate what exists. "But," demands St. Augustin, "supposing them in other respects ever so virtuous, ever so supernatural in their virtue, is there nothing to startle them in this one wish of theirs to separate, to disengage? Is it justice to raise altar against altar through rebellious pride? Is it justice, when persecutors even spared the tunic of the Saviour, to rend his Church? If these things are not acts of justice, how can you be the good people that you are represented to be*?" Nevertheless, if you have nothing of youth in you, all this will be urged in vain. Grown-up people have no palinode to sing; and so all shall go on as before,

> "And heir from heir shall hold this quarrel up
> Whiles England shall have generation."

Happily, however, for the young, the true root of fellowship, from which all other confederations are but ill-conditioned slips, can be found out by a rule as plain as the plain bald pate of father Time himself; and each will, therefore, often say with the poet, addressing what he has always heard spoken of as the centre of unity:

> "Not to these altars of a day,
> At party's call, my gift I bring;
> But on thy older shrine I lay
> A freeman's dearest offering†."

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* In Ps. cxiv. † Whittier.

Familiarity with the genius of the Children's Bower unfits us, again, for cultivating what may be termed the spirit of negation and of contradiction, to which some individuals, without erudition enough to adopt the doctrine of Empedocles, that the two efficient principles of things are love and discord, appear to be so singularly predisposed.

Ask them what is the importance or the learning of their debates, and they will answer with Petulant, "Importance is one thing, and learning's another; but a debate's a debate, that I assert." The disciples of Gorgias and Polus are still to be met with;—men who may be indicated as contradictors, who are teachers to others of this art, which is a power sufficient for controversy about all things, being able to make others, at least in private meetings, as powerful as themselves *. A recent traveller remarks of a whole nation, for which observation, as directed against it, I am willing to believe he has no warrant in facts, that "they like the saying of no better than the saying of yes: that, whatever you may allege, they are meditating opposition." He cites the example of Hezekiah Woodward, who wrote a book against the Lord's Prayer. But it was nominally at least to a different people we must remember, for our consolation, that St. Augustin applied the words of the Psalm, "You are a city of contradiction," adding of them, "It is here, says one; it is there, says another. You are a city of contradiction †." Be that as it may, however, there are no where wanting some individuals among your "barbati" who seem employed on an especial mission to oppose and contradict every thing but what is itself a negation, and every person who holds any thing positive that can be contradicted. There are men whose whole life is spent in "pro" and "contra;" "their tongue," as Overbury says, "going always before their wit, like gentleman-usher, but somewhat faster, who are long-winded, able to speak more with ease than any man can endure to hear with patience;" like him described by the Duc de Saint-Simon, who appeared on one occasion rather cast down, "Parlant moins qu'à ordinaire, c'est-à-dire," he rather ungallantly adds, "encore comme trois ou quatre femmes;" men whose devotion is singularity,

* Soph. † In Ps. liv.

and only solace for the heart, contradiction; as if deeming it an excellent thing to bring back that study to which the ancient philosophers devoted themselves, who, as Picus of Mirandula remarks, "sought to obtain glory by contention." If any one wishes to know how far this spirit can carry clever and distinguished men on the road of scepticism, he should read the third book of this admirable philosopher's work against the Gentiles, where he will find that there have been subtle and ingenious men who attacked in this way the truths of grammar, orthography, etymology, rhetoric, physics, geometry,—for Aristotle would not adopt the definitions of Euclid,—the arithmetical faculty,—for the Pyrrhonians would not accept the notions of unity or of duality,—astronomy, musical art,—which the Epheatician philosophers derided as useless, and would overthrow in its principle, taking away time and measure, rejecting syllogisms, definition, and induction,—dialectics, all the liberal arts, as well as the highest and most spiritual parts of philosophy, morals, and natural religion *. But without following this spirit beyond the sphere of ordinary life and its duties, we have daily as much proof before our eyes of its evil as of its antagonism to the mind of youth. Laertes cannot speak of reason to the Dane, and lose his voice, but here it is not exactly so; for these persons "hear with their eyes; ears follow their mind, and that's not at leisure." They assert easily enough, "festive et breviter," as Cicero says; but when they have to conclude, they do not descend by admitted steps; they precipitate themselves where nothing is granted. There are some negations which involve those who make them in difficulties, from which by logic there is no escape; "ita quoque se verterent," as Cicero says of the Stoics, "jaceat necesse est omnis eorum sollertia." Here is a man who, with all the subtlety of a dialectitian, and wanting nothing of the genius of an historian but his power of discerning truth from falsehood, will deny, through a certain religious zeal, every proposition announced in defence of ancient Christianity, professing, and often perhaps really feeling, all the while a great desire to be fair, and by his whole air an innate love of gravity, and saying to you, if you only are so ill

* Exam. Van. Doct. Gentium et Verit. Christ. Disciplinæ, lib. iii.

read in countenances as to offer him a cigar, "Est mihi tecum pro aris et focis certamen." Well, the boy's answer is the best, "He's in his fit now; and does not talk after the wisest." "Quæ est ista calliditas, res vetustate robustas calumniando velle pervertere?" They deny all things, because they see nothing as it is, whole and undivided. They would burn our annals, say that they were false. They confess any thing rather than that God has fulfilled his promise to his Church, or consequently, for they have no escape from the inference, takes care of human things; and they will have you consent to all their historical paradoxes, and all their philosophic speculations, and become like themselves, "quod velle efficere non mediocris insaniæ est." Lamb recommends a friend who had some crotchet about a voyage to Tartary, to repeat to himself every night after he had said his prayers, the words, "Independent Tartary, Independent Tartary," two or three times, or to say, "Independent, Independent," and to associate with them the idea of oblivion. How many words so repeated would these people do well to repeat to get some ideas bordering on insanity out of their heads! But they care not for a charge of madness. Some of them, without over much conscience, are like Lapland witches; they live upon selling contrary winds, and on wrecked vessels.

I repeat it, the atmosphere of the bower unfits us for such company, renders it impossible for us to like men loving dissension, diversity, and perhaps, above all, difference implying hostile unlikeness. It prepares us for saying to them, even when their discrimination leads them to detect something that is really wrong in details, while giving up the cause of general unity, "Urbem philosophiæ mihi crede proditis dum castella defenditis." It puts in our mouth the ready and boyish, but not less just, remark, "Whatsoever a man denies, you are not bound to believe him;" and if they will persist, it consoles us with the reflection that, after all is said and done, after all attempts to make the natural consequences of Divine faith pass for supineness or unenlightened opposition to a progressive age, "the taciturnity of the pious can do more than the full voices of those who contradict."

Again, familiarity with children and young people indisposes those who love them for consenting to the contradictions in par-

ticular which have relation to what is of ancient Christianity in doctrine and discipline, in life and manners. "The Earl of Leicester vow'd to make the name of a Catholick as odious in England as the name of a Turk*." He had wandered far from the Children's Bower when he arrived at that resolution. This result, indeed, follows from what we observed respecting youthful piety in the last chapter, and therefore its consideration need not now detain us long, though it will not be wasting time to glance in passing at those who indulge in contradictions of this kind.

"Negation itself," as Elia says, "hath a positive more or less."

> "O hateful error, melancholy's child!
> Why dost thou show to the apt thoughts of men
> The things that are not?"

Falsehood, as Johnson shows in an ingenious allegory, by her cunning procedures encroaches upon the world, and wherever she carries her victories leaves the Passions in full authority behind her. Truth has every where, excepting in our bower, to force her passage, finding every intellect elsewhere precluded by prejudice, and every heart preoccupied by passion. She advances, therefore, but slowly, and often loses her conquests, which she leaves behind her, by sudden insurrections of the appetites, that shake off their allegiance and range themselves again under the banner of her enemy. Moreover, it may be observed in general, that her adversary does not seem to feel himself bound in his strategy by any very delicate sense of either humanity or honour. He does not evince the generous mind of Camillus when he sent back the children of Phaliscus when he was besieging that town, and punished the treacherous pedagogue who was for delivering them up to him. The self-conscious or even conscientious contradictors of the old Christian truths appear sometimes as if they were intent on swelling their ranks by any means; and so they are apt to imitate the policy of Maximinus the emperor, who, wishing to injure the Christians, drew up a book against our Saviour as having been

* The Life and Death of the Earl of Arundel, edited by the Duke of Norfolk, E. M., p. 60.

written by Pontius Pilate, and this he ordered all schoolmasters to read to their children, who were to study it, to learn it, and to sing it *.

In the world among grown-up people you find persuasions and things cooked for their palate,—that which is sweet, as philologists remark, (suada) persuades. In the bower you have faith and objective realities or convictions,—that which is binding, (vincere) convinces. No one ever yet thought of asking a child or youth of what persuasion he was. Persuasion, it is remarked, "is a more active principle of conduct than conviction: the persuaded man deals in asseverations and bustle, in order that he may pass for convinced; but the convinced man awaits with a sort of pity the accession of others to his opinion †." In that way you can account for the silence of children, or for their playing at leap-frog while you are disparaging what they live on.

We cannot stop here to give a dissertation on negative quantities, and to notice all the especial denials to which we have alluded. Elsewhere they are heard often enough. Here it is not necessary to inquire much about them. Let others consult

> "Sermons, whose writers played such dangerous tricks,
> Their own heresiarchs called them heretics ‡."

There are men "whose discourse is unanswerable by reason of their obstinacy, and whose speech is much, though little to the purpose." One instance of this opposition must suffice. "What do the pagans say of us?" asks St. Augustin. "They say," he replies, "that we corrupt manners and pervert men by giving the remedy of penitence, and causing them to sin with more confidence of pardon. But we reply that men grow worse rather by despair than by hope of pardon, as we see in gladiators, who are reckless, knowing what is prepared for them. So you, as a sinner, would argue; and despair would make you worse than you are; but to hold out the hope of forgiveness is to facilitate conversion §." The world hears voices still to contradict the Christian discipline on the same point. In the world

* Euseb. ix. Hist. 5 & 6.
† Taylor, English Synonyms.
‡ Holmes.
§ In Ps. ci.

many of those who are advanced in years, when speaking of confession, use words like those of the king to Helena—

> "——————— I say we must not
> So stain our judgment, or corrupt our hope,
> To prostitute our past-cure malady
> To empirics; or to dissever so
> Our great self and our credit, to esteem
> A senseless help, when help past sense we deem."

When clothed in less stately language the contradictions of the same men do not suit better those who come from the Children's Bower. Little pleasure it would be to them to fall in with a Pepys, e'en a crow of the same nest, returning from midnight mass in the Queen's Chapel, saying, "I was sorry for missing what I expected, which was to have had a child born and dressed there, and a great deal to do, instead of breaking up and nothing like it being done, and leaving the people receiving the Sacrament, while I took coach, and set down two gentlemen and a lady who came thither to see also, and did make mighty mirth in their talk of the folly of this religion; and through Covent Garden for them, and drank some burnt wine at the Rose door." These contradictions, they would reply, not inaptly citing the words of a comedy, "are but stale jests, nothing but old fond paradoxes to make fools laugh i'the alehouse;" or, if these old negations are presented in a new shape, it will be only for their propounders to hear from them, "To vouch this is no proof, without more certain and more overt test than these poor likelihoods of modern seeming do prefer against it."

Thus, by consorting with the company in the bower, we can learn the great lesson conveyed by St. Augustin in these words: "You will shelter them in your tent against the contradiction of tongues. Soldiers are under a tent. Combat then while you are under canvas, in order that you may afterwards be received into the house full of glory. Here we see nothing but the contradictions of tongues, nothing but heresies, but schisms; a thousand different tongues combat by their contradictions the true doctrine. Run then to the tent of the Lord. Keep to the

Catholic Church. Quit not the rule of truth, and you will be sheltered in the tent against the contradiction of tongues *."

Again, the same atmosphere tends certainly to unfit men for the company of those stern and reckless declaimers, who, as individuals coming forward voluntarily without even any obligation imposed on them by their sect, and often actually in flagrant contradiction to their own recognized standard of virtue, love to accuse and ridicule that large and generally pacific category of men who constitute what is termed in ecclesiastical language the faithful. Offer to awaken their regard for some of these in public or in private life, and their reply will be, "They cannot stay to pick them in a pile of noisome, musty chaff." Nay, only let their displeasure have play, and

> "We shall be winnow'd with so rough a wind
> That even our corn shall seem as light as chaff,
> And good from bad find no partition."

And yet what is the ground of it all? Read Sterne's sermon on St. Peter's character, in which he contrasts it with that of the Holy See, and the child who has ever met a priest of its communion will have a hearty laugh at the preacher's expense. Of course there are faults every where, but to invent them like that! What must be the cause that accepts or needs such aid? Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.

There are persons who have lived very long that goatlike life of which Plato speaks †, of whom posterity would only know from their tombs, if they had a true epitaph, that they had eaten many a meal, drunk many a flagon, and uttered many a reproachful word; like him of old, commemorated thus:

> Πολλὰ φάγων, καὶ πολλὰ πίνων, καὶ πολλὰ κακ' εἴπων
> Ἀνθρώπους κεῖμαι Τιμοκρέων Ῥόδιος.

For such things as them one can scarce think there's any cause to wonder, they are so slight; but we cannot shut our eyes to the fact, that there are men of a higher order who, at least, spend their passion on a misprised mood, disparaging the faith

* In Ps. xxx. † Cratylus.

they do not know, not liking to inquire, as Lactantius said of the pagans, "because they wish to condemn as injurious those whom they might know to be innocent, being unwilling to have their innocence proved, as if it were a greater iniquity to condemn a proved innocence, than an innocence unheard." "There remains in them," says St. Augustin, using a bold figure, "only the weakness of a great animosity, which is weaker in proportion as it is strong *."

"If you condemned a man without examination of his cause," he says to the predecessors of such adversaries, "would you dare to call it acting justly? You mount on a tribunal which you have raised in your heart, and you pronounce sentence against a man without trial. For such conduct against a single individual, you are considered unjust. You treat all the world thus, and you believe yourself to be just? See if it be not the Catholic Church which suffers this injustice †." Under every standard may be found some whom it is hardly possible to acquit of misanthropy; but in the world it often happens that those who follow with real overflowing charity the old road of faith are still thought, or rather perhaps said, in unguarded moments, to be what the Christians were considered by the profound Tacitus,—as a people "odio humani generis convicti;" or, as the amiable and generally just Quintilian says, "a pernicious race;" for while styling Domitian a god, this was what he uttered against the followers of Christ. Learn wisdom, we might say to them, if not from children, at least from their company the birds. The bird never throws pebbles into a river or lake to raise the water; instinctively it knows better than to do so; but it does throw them into the ewer; yet you throw dirt into the sea of the old Christianity, as if to bring its waters, and those who are in them, within reach of your thirsty and insatiable, though, no doubt, well-intentioned hatred. We are not here concerned with individuals; we are noticing only public facts, which prove that so true to its original feature is this disposition, that both men, and even states, will exclude from whatever degree of toleration circumstances may have extorted from them, those persons who enter on the way of

* In Ps. xxxii. † In Ps. cxlv.

the ancient faith, after having been placed by birth on that opposed to it, as when Origen escaped martyrdom only from having been born a Christian. The decree of the Emperor Septimus Severus condemning to death only converts from pagans, Origen's father, Leonidas, therefore suffered martyrdom while the son was not involved in his fate. Such exemptions, of course, are no longer needed; but still there are times and occasions when men might desire to see the tribunals of justice safe from the contagion of bigotry, and the administrators of law above the suspicion of being influenced by it. There are still in the world some like those who saw the milk-white hind—

> "The common hunt, though from their rage restrained
> By sovereign power, her company disdained,
> Grinned as they passed, and with a glaring eye
> Gave gloomy signs of secret enmity."

And to what inconsistencies does this passion drive them! I hardly know where you can find a more striking instance than in a letter of the amiable Sterne to his daughter, when after remarking the folly of her being kept from supper on a maigre day till after midnight, at the fêtes champêtres of the Marquis de Sade, in order that she might have meat, he adds, "I would have given my topaz ring to have seen them all go to mass after having spent the night in dancing." And it is Sterne who says this; for therein lies the pith of the remark.

From falling into the ranks of this kind of opposition, men might be deterred by observing how much better is the light presented generally, when they can escape such influence, by cultivating the mind and character of the young.

In fine, familiarity with the Children's Bower unfits us intellectually for the society of those who wander in the region of the vague and the profane, where self-contradiction, inconsistency, and vanity follow as a necessary consequence upon uncertain, indefinite, and purely secular opinions.

"If," says St. Augustin, "we must know what the adversaries of truth say, we ought to hear what opponents, calling themselves Christians, say, and not what Anaxagoras and Democritus thought." No doubt men commissioned formally

to teach ought to follow this suggestion; but as for others, as for "the like of us," only graduates in the bower, the answer to such Christians may be in the Virgilian line,

"Non nostrum inter vos tantas componere lites;"

and the farther we pursued such grim inquiries, the more we should be sure to feel our own disqualifications, arising from the previous influence that fresh young thoughts had exercised on our minds.

Who are these opponents calling themselves Christians? Little mates of the bower never dream that these can be such persons as they themselves by any chance ever light upon. It is not the errand-boy that nods to them in the street, nor the tradesman that smiles as they pass, nor the mechanic who lets them rummage in his tool-basket, nor the young strangers who come like myrmidons to take off the eldest brother, nor the good-natured looking fathers of those youths, who drop in from time to time as visitors. The instinct of the bower will not recognize any such persons as intentional opponents, no matter what they are called, or where from habit they may go to; but the adversaries felt to be such the moment they show themselves, who are the genuine descendants of those alluded to by St. Augustin in the above passage, are, or rather perhaps we should say were, worthies that have little to do with children, and with sitting or playing in a bower. They were "men of a subtle and penetrating mind, of a profound erudition, of a vast and immense literature; men who would have been ignorant of nothing if they had known to submit themselves—they were great men, of rare genius—and well might they be feared. But when the heart is in peace and silence, the most limited mind has within itself a fund of justice and truth, which defends it against the seduction of false doctrines; whereas in the tempest of the passions the greatest man is hardly a man. Once they speak it is a lethargy which comes over the mind, a cloud that obscures it, a veil through which nothing can be seen, excepting what cupidity shows it. 'There will be men,' says the Apostle, 'cupidinous and lovers of themselves;' therefore 'oportet et hæreses esse.' It is the

heart that makes heresies *." From knowing such men, from intercourse with them, and even from hearing their names and opinions mentioned, the genius of the bower can deliver us. But is such a deliverance to be invoked? Ought we not to hear such men? I see no reason why we should.

Eloquence, or rather rhetoric, is no substitute, even on subjects of gravest thought, for the innocent prattle of the young. Without having ever read the Gorgias, you feel that there is not the same life, or even depth in it. These men, of course, were eloquent; but words ought surely to be laboured, when they are intended to supersede things. Outside gravity supplies a sorry compensation for solidity within. Opinions that leave men sad are a poor exchange for the faith that makes them merry; theories that perplex, bewilder, and render men double, can hardly reconcile us for losing the clear, joyous, simple, and always reverential spirit with which we have been familiar through intercourse with the young. With these long grown-up men no doubt there is gravity and stateliness enough; they are gravity from head to foot, though not always "from head to heart." The holy fathers speak of the gravity of heretics; thus St. Leo says, that Catholicism is so divinely consolidated, "ut eam neque hæretica unquam corrumpere gravitas, sive pagana potuerit superare perfidia;" and so Orosius in his preface to St. Augustin, says, "Præceperas mihi ut scriberem adversus vaniloquam gravitatem eorum qui alieni à civitate Dei, ex locorum agrestium compitis et pagis pagani vocantur." "There is a gravity proceeding from thought," says a great author, "which is most noble; but there is also a gravity proceeding from dulness and mere incapability of enjoyment which is most base." Whether it proceed from this latter source, or from pride, the spirit of youth, at least, recoils from it with an instinct that might instruct men. Above all, that repugnance of the young for what cannot be understood, might instruct their elders. As for us coming from the Children's Bower, many of the propositions of these remarkable men seem as unintelligible as the sayings of Heraclitus the obscure, who

* De Neuville.

blamed Hesiod for distinguishing the day from the night, since both, he said, were one, who taught that to mount and to descend are the same thing, and that the straight line and the curve are also one and the same thing. As an old writer says, "Where the gate stands open, these men, in that respect alone like juveniles, are ever seeking a stile; and where their learning ought to climb they creep through." If the father of confusion had led them, they could not seem to be more puzzled. Graduates at the bower simply can't understand what these protestors are pleased to affirm. What would you have them do? They don't know their language; it may be all very fine, but they feel that they are not made to use it. "Divine providence orders," says an old writer, "that a fog and a tempest never did, nor can meet together in nature. How sad, then," he adds, "is the condition of many sectaries in our age, which in the same instant have a fog of ignorance in their judgment, and a tempest of violence in their affections, being too blind to go right, and yet too active to remain still."

And, after all, to pass over the eloquence, and the gravity and the obscurity of this opposition, and to come to the end for which it is all professedly exercised, what on earth could induce a little innocent humble playmate of the bower, of his own accord, to join it? There is something in the innocence of the young, we might suggest, that serves like a magnifying power to enable them to discern the difference between the works of Divine and those of human construction. As we owe the beauty of the latter in material things to optical illusions, which are dispelled by a lens; so whatever men construct out of their own heads, in the spiritual and moral order, seems the work of unskilful savages, when viewed without the medium of passion and prejudice. In our Polytechnic, a lecturer exhibits a cambric handkerchief of the finest quality magnified 60,000 times. It resembles an uncouth hurdle, or a rude fence of twisted briers. He then shows the leaf of a tree; and the beauty and symmetry of its pores, veins, fibres, and ramifications only appear, in consequence of our increased power of vision, more perfect and wonderful. Such, we might say, is the difference between Divine and human art in regard to religion. Tried by a test of this kind, we see in what is man

made all the defects of a national, sectarian, or individual religion; we behold in what is from God all the beauty and wisdom of a world-wide, universal faith, adapted to all, open to all, comprehensible as far as it concerns us to all; with its law like that given to man by God in Eden; with its freedom which secures with peace and harmony and order, the individualism and freedom that are essential to the dignity and happiness of mankind; for let the latter be ever so much prized, still man, as a great author says, "is the missionary of order; he is the servant not of the devil and chaos, but of God and the universe *!"

Youth, therefore, possessing, as we have said, such a test, may be able to address a leader of the religious opposition in Cicero's words, and say, "Quæ tandem ea est disciplina, ad quam me deducas si ab hac abstraxeris †?" Grave men will profess to take from us what never existed but in their own imaginations, and to leave what is sufficient for themselves; but we require something more than a nation for authority, a human law for guidance, our own mind with a written book for our instruction, nature for our discipline, and a common hall or the air for our worship. Where shall we adore God? It was for them at one time sufficient to have the open sky. It is still sufficient for the disciples of some famous philosophers and poets. Shall we adore God above the winds? "The birds then," as St. Augustin says, "would have the advantage of us ‡." To such adorers of the vague, we can apply the words of Madame de Sevigné, "Epaississez-moi un peu la religion, qui s'évapore toute à force d'être subtilisée." The Children's Bower sends forth no transcendental worshippers, who can unite with men of contradiction within any four walls offered them by a government, but a band of brothers who seek God in his own temple, and before his holy altar. They too may like gravity in season, but it will be not that presented by an old acquaintance with a new face, but that which accompanies constancy and wisdom. "Quæremus gravitatis, constantiæ, firmitatis, sapientiæ judicium §." They too may like

* Carlyle.
† Acad. ii.
‡ In Ps. cxxxvii.
§ Cicero, Acad. ii.

logic, but not a power of reasoning justly that will resign its functions whenever interest, or passion, or caprice, or some unaccountable sadness might thus be opposed in a man to conclusions that he can foresee to be inevitable.

> "Can you guess, they will say to each other,
> What the reason should be, that we never mention
> The church, or the high altar, but his melancholy
> Grows and increases on him?"

"I suspect that there is in some men's brains," says a recent traveller, "a valve that can be closed at pleasure, as an engineer shuts off steam. The most sensible and well-informed men in some countries possess the power of thinking just so far as certain national laws have ordained in religious matters. They talk on other subjects with courage and logic, and show you magnificent results; but the same men who have brought free trade or geology to their present standing, look grave and lofty, and shut down their valve as soon as the conversation approaches that subject. From that moment you talk with a box-turtle." After such observations by shrewd, impartial, and even generally admiring contemporaries, can any one be offended if he hears cited the words of St. Augustin, saying, "These men may have different sentiments, and seem to contend frequently with each other; but they all agree in this point, that they have vain and earthly thoughts. They may have different opinions, but they have the same vanity*." Alluding to some such characters, an old author says, "their opinion is ever ready and ever idle." One thing about them is very apparent, they are strongly attached to the present order of things. "They are under the Jewish law," says a recent observer, "and they read with sonorous emphasis that their days shall be long in the land. They shall have sons and daughters, flocks and herds, wine and oil. The doctrine of the Old Testament is their religion. The first leaf of the New Testament they do not open."

That affinity with the doctrines of universal union existing in the young, which we noticed in the last chapter, will certainly unfit men whom it has at all influenced, for entering into the

* In Ps. lxxx.

views of those who, in order to find some standing ground among their vague conceptions, are willing to approve of religion as a national institution, as being, for reasons that they cannot consistently explain, a part and instrument of their own country's glory. These last are for religion and politics. "There's a couple of topics for you," as Valentine says, "no more like one another than oil and vinegar; and yet those two beaten together by a state cook, make sauce for the whole nation."

"Those who separate themselves from the saints," says St. Augustin, "will have a king over them, but not Jesus Christ. Every nation that places its joy in a human royalty, and which does not wish God to reign over it, is rejected far from the saints. The Jews would have only Cæsar. One does not deny that Cæsar was king. He was a man who ruled over other men in regard to human things; but there is another King, who rules in that which regards Divine things. The Jews did not sin in saying that Cæsar was their king, but in not wishing to have Jesus Christ for their king; and so now amongst Christians it is the same offence, and the same persons who afflict us *." To men of this kind St. Augustin addressed this question, which might have been read with profit by some panegyrists of the sixteenth century: "You have said to an apostate emperor, that justice only had access to him. Does the apostasy of Julian seem to you to be a part of the Gospel †?"

Cecilius the pagan, in the dialogue of Minutius Felix, admits the ancient religion, because it seems to him necessary for the preservation of society, moral order, and the glory of his country; but his vague scepticism for all that is no less profound. This is the point of view taken still by many persons advanced in years, who cling to some few of the forms of the past after having lost its faith. When a man of good breeding, he is swayed, as an acute observer says, by national pride in his religion. So far is he from attaching any meaning to the words of his formula, that he believes himself to have done almost the generous thing, and that it is very condescending in him to pray to God. Upon the whole, there seems to be nothing popular

* In Ps. lv. ‡ Ib. xxxvi.

within these regions of thought, and therefore the young shun them. From the first, it was the nobles in Germany, France, and England who claimed and protected them. In Scotland it was men of good family who in general first extended them as preachers of the Reform. To the present day these thoughts are, in most countries, the hereditary domain of the rich. As far as being concerned with any thing like positive religion, they appear, in most countries, to belong to them alone. They arose at a time when a great author tells us to read in the very architecture of the period, the pride of state, the pride of knowledge, and the pride of system. Indeed, with art, in every form but that of the ignoble grotesque or caricature, though it is almost a digression to notice it, they were at open war. With that whole world they quarrelled. A celebrated author, passionately attached to them, tells us with regret and astonishment, that he has never yet met with one of them whose heart was thoroughly set upon the world to come, and, so far as human judgment (by which, in this instance, he seems to mean his own) could pronounce, perfect and right before God, who cared about art at all—that where he found a love for it, there was always traceable some entanglement of the thoughts with the matters of this world, causing them to fall into strange distresses and doubts, and often leading them into what they themselves would confess to be errors in understanding, or even failures in duty*. That Reform quarrelled with all dignity and symbolism in regard to the Divine worship, referring it to "the stage properties of superstition, which have been from the beginning of the world, and must be to the end of it†." It quarrelled with all ancient historical associations, as those who are conversant with them are aware; and it quarrelled with the doctrines and monuments of the old popular Christianity, which it considered so many barbaric elements. In every instance, however prevalent became a short insanity, the instinct, the intuitions, the conscience, and the religion of youth were outraged. All seemed to be adjusted to suit the pride of state, as well as the pride of knowledge. It was for the gentry, not for the common people. As a foreign writer and close observer says, "The operatives do

* The Stones of Venice. † Ib.

not own it; and gentlemen lately testified in the House of Commons that in their lives they never saw a poor man in a ragged coat inside any of its thresholds." No one at all events will feel hurt by our remarking, that most assuredly from the first there was nothing childlike in this opposition; and of course this was what recommended it to some minds; for the simplicity, notwithstanding all its grandeur, of the whole ancient scheme, shocks persons that can admire only what is uncommon. It would seem as if they would not for themselves accept even the salvation of the soul, unless it were to be accomplished by some difficult and extraordinary means out of the reach of common mortals. That it should be easy to achieve for a child, for a peasant, for a person without learning, without views of his own painfully worked out, without singular talents, and without ambition, is a reflection that they cannot digest. Therefore they must have singular operations; and for this purpose they certainly found in the new system enough to content them. Nothing simple or childlike there assuredly. "Only just think of the sudden abrogation," as a great writer who rejects the natural conclusion from such premises says, "of all beloved custom, and believed traditions, all that for fifteen hundred years had been closest to the hearts of men, or most precious for their help,—faiths that had ruled the destiny, and sealed the departure of souls, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude; prayers that from the lips of the mothers to those of the children had distilled like sweet waterfalls, sounding through the silence of ages; hopes that had pointed the purposes and ministered the strength of life, brightened the last glances, and shaped the last syllables of death; charities that had woven chains of pitying or aspiring communion between this world and the unfathomable beneath and above; and, more than these, the spirits of all the innumerable, undoubting dead, beckoning to the one way by which they had been content to follow the things that belonged unto their peace*." Only just think what it must have been for children and families to see their chantries violated, their beloved dead cast out like rubbish, and to hear proclaimed that no more prayers were to be offered up for the

* Ruskin.

repose of their souls, and for assisting those who loved them to follow them to a better world. So that thenceforth each one was to share that fate of Buonconte de Montefeltro when he died, and could say to Dante, meeting him in the shades,

"Giovanna, nor none else, have care for me."

Only think what a violation of children's wisdom, what a scandal to the little ones, what a contrast to the mind of those who represent on earth the kingdom of heaven, when all that the Christian world had venerated for 1500 years, was suddenly overthrown, vilified, branded, and suppressed, and by whom? Ay, let them answer that question! Anglicanism, when like Proteus, after trying all her arts, she returns to herself, and at length speaks with her own mouth, will tell you by the lips of a very clever and eloquent advocate, it was by a king worthy of admiration, though James I. allowed "it was ill-natur'd in him to execute so many whom he had so highly favoured." I exaggerate nothing, I malign no one. Froude, learned, intelligent, and most ingenious, Froude will tell you plainly, it was by a great and wise monarch. Children, and all this little England of the bower, will assure you, that it was by a second Blue Beard. "Utri horum creditis, Quirites?" I, for one, will call upon the first boy I meet in the same manner, as Homer says Scamander, when assailed by Achilles, called upon Simois, saying, "Dear brother, let us unite to repel the prowess of this man."

It seems rather over bold to affirm that the Children's Bower sends out great logicians; nevertheless, we must proceed to remark that its graduates, who reason instinctively, who, as Ruskin would say, "take leaps over intermediate syllogisms by the score, yet never miss their footing at the end of the leap," are utterly disqualified for relishing the self-contradictions and inconsistencies of the learned, who, in protesting against faith, have had their education elsewhere. If we strike every thing on this walk all round, as Plato says, in order to try whether perchance it gives a cracked sound, until coming to the view of that which is the most free from a flaw, we may use it for our decision, we shall not be long in finding that what youth has an affinity for, is what will most satisfy the ear of our intelligence.

Read a passage of Fleury or of Stolberg to a young person, and he will at once understand a page in which there is no blind contradiction between the passion of the writer and the evident reality of facts. But what can he make, for instance, of these adamantine histories of Latin Christianity, or of regenerated art in connexion with it? Just place a few of their sentences by the side of the former composition, and you will be able to judge what would be his perplexity if required to comprehend them. It is not necessary to speak of the half-frantic ebullitions which are permitted to deform some of the noblest modern works in our language,—symptoms of insane fits, during which men of genius will coolly take for granted what is not only denied, but what has been demonstrated by irrefragable testimony and authentical historical documents to be false; but open many cautious books that indicate calm and immense erudition, histories of "an apparent moderation and of a skilful partiality;" there he will be required to believe that the exercise of the power of the keys was "mere abuse and priestcraft," and at the same time that "the words of Christ, and his words alone, shall not pass away." Which of these must we retract? for, as Plato would say, "these two positions, taken together, are not set down in a very musical manner, for they neither accord nor harmonize with each other." There he will be required to believe in the "distinct mission of Teutonic Christianity," to believe that it will, as the world advances, approximate more closely to the absolute and perfect faith of Christ, and, in fine, that it "may discover and establish the sublime union of religion and reason," as if this union had never yet been shown to the Christian world. "They say," observes St. Augustin, "that they have saved the Scriptures. Well, they saved them to destroy them in another way. Why have you saved from fire what you efface with your tongues? We may rather say, you have not saved, but you have betrayed them *."

We need not cite instances that shock more grossly, as being careful, deliberate, though still, no doubt, unconscious violations of consistency and truth. The negations of these men, resting sometimes upon some old forgotten thing that they have raked

* In Ps. xxi.

but of a heap of rubbish, and of which no one in our times has ever heard, may seem unanswerable to themselves and a few wondering auditors; but really a child can often teach us to see the folly of depending on them. "Look at this passage," these objectors will say to us boastingly, to whom we can reply in the words of Cicero, "Difficilis locus ad contra dicendum illo—fortasse, sed Romano facillimus." "Their pompous learning seems chiefly made up of necromancy," as an old writer says, "by raising many dead questions" which do not in the least concern either children, or youth, or any one out of their own country, perhaps, at a particular moment. 'Tis a wrong to their reputation to be ignorant of any thing; and yet, as any child on such occasions can assure them, they know not that they know nothing. In their poetry they draw copious drafts upon antiquity; but in facetious commentaries they spurn that to which they have been indebted for the best feelings and the richest imagery. As Lamb said of one of their chiefs, "They pick up pence by showing the shrine, and they take money a second time by exposing what they fancy to be the trick of it afterwards. They carry their verse to Rome for sale in the morning; and, swifter than a pedlar can transmute his pack, they are at Canterbury with their prose ware before night*." "But the fact is, the disproportions of absurdity," as Johnson says, "grow less and less visible as men are reconciled by degrees to the deformity of a mistress; and falsehood, by long use, is assimilated to the mind as poison to the body."

In the bower the will follows the judgment; in the world men often prefer one thing and choose another. "Many a man," says Taylor, "prefers the fairer, and chooses the richer mistress." He may prefer or put before naked truth, but he will choose or take hold of error with its gaudy trappings.

We cannot remain here to produce examples in point, such as can be found in Evelyn's diary and correspondence, where he complains of "the daily sacrifice ceasing," and of "the viaticum" being withheld, and speaks of his "confessor." But there is one instance of an outrage to the most common and vulgar sense of justice, as expressed by the trite proverb, which

* Letters, 278.

is constantly committed in this company opposed to the children; and it is described by St. Augustin with as much fidelity to what we see with our own eyes as if he were writing at the present day. He cites the words of the Psalm, "God will break the teeth of the adders in their mouth *," and then proceeds as follows: "He has broken the jaws of the lions, 'Deus conteret dentes eorum in ore ipsorum: molas leonum confringet Dominus.' We have an example," he continues, "of this in certain persons. How they accused us of being, in some sort, their persecutors, because we excluded them from our churches! Ask them now, Ought one to exclude any one from the Church, or ought one not? Let them answer that. Let them say one ought not; then the Maximinianists will enter into their churches. To prevent this they say one ought to exclude them. Why then accuse us? Your teeth are broken in your own mouth. You have called yourselves Catholics in order to expel them. Why do you like to call yourselves Catholic in order to expel others, rather than to be really Catholic in order that you may not yourself be excluded as of their number? But how are these men heretics? asks the judge. They read the councils that condemned them; but if these councils condemned them, they condemned also you. I do not ask if these sentences are true or false; let us put aside that question, if it be a question; I only ask, following your own views, are these sentences true or false? If true, believe them; if false, why do you make use of them? See if your teeth are not broken in your mouth †."

But this belongs to a region on which young people don't care to remain long, and which, if their elders should learn from them to dislike and avoid, they will not be the worse for it.

In fine, the atmosphere of the Children's Bower, with all its gaiety, its frolic, and its play, is essentially, as we have elsewhere seen, religious, and consequently those who have breathed it, long and recently, are unfit for relishing a society that is under the influence of a philosophy and literature exclusively and essentially profane. The old Christian impulse given to society, let what will happen, cannot in any country cease all of a sudden. The machine may continue to roll for three hundred

* Ps. lvii. † Ib.

years after the original action has been withdrawn; but if that action should wholly cease, and if a counteraction be protracted, it won't roll for ever. Something very like wildness and chaos, more pleasing to mature depravity than to youthful innocence, will by degrees return; and then will ensue a state of things so contrary to the Divine harmonies which attract childhood, that one who appeals to the latter must then expect to be judged as a physician would be judged by epicures with a cook for his accuser. And here is the culminating point where all these negations end—profaneness, or what is called worldliness, compatible with great respectability, but not the more respectable. "The outward aspect of worldliness," says a great theologian, "is not sin. Its character is negative. It abounds in omissions; and throughout the Gospels our Saviour seems purposely to point to it rather than to open sin." We can learn, therefore, from the little company of the bower, to distrust, in regard to the other world, the guidance of men who are Catholic only so far as being every where,—helping to make up the gross band of the unfaithful,—all whose care is about "the frail bark of the flesh, heeding not what becomes of the passenger." We can learn to distrust, in the same regard, the guidance of a nation where, however glorious in regard to time, the appearances are strong against the charitable side of the question respecting its views and conduct in regard to eternity; where, as one who loved and lately visited it says, "nothing comes to the bookshops but politics, travels, statistics, and engineering; as if inspiration had ceased, as if no vast hope, no religion, no song of joy, no wisdom, no analogy existed any more; and where the tone of colleges, of scholars, and of literary society has this mortal air." We can learn from it to look elsewhere for ideas and manners more in harmony with the mind of those who are presented to us by the Deity Himself as being already of the kingdom of heaven.

But let us end this disagreeable chapter as we began it, with smelling the rose, the violet, and the carnation, or, if you will hear it in school language, with a lesson of charity, which youth, after imparting to us all these needful influences, gives us over and above and into the bargain. Judging, then, from what was observable in little John, and in his brother, of whom, alas!

death with its sanctity permits us now to speak without disguise, you may take this as the general rule of all the young, which men in later life will do well to imitate; place them where you will, and they will make the best of it. They will turn it into something that can yield food for love. Live where they may, they will love the population through which they trundle their hoops and thread their merry way. Are they in France? they will exult in seeing with their eyes the outward bond which, at least in a nominal, which generally ends in a real, way, connects them religiously with every one, high and low, rich and poor, learned and simple. Are they in England? without abating of the caution requisite, and without having ever read a page of theology treating on the attributes of God, they will fall back on their own wonderful and mysterious resources for loving both God and their neighbour. At the worst moments, they will see things and persons with the eyes of their heart, not with those of their head, though the latter seldom leave them in a dilemma. They will see union where their elders behold discord; they will see friends where the senior points at enemies; they will see circumstance where the old detect malice; they will behold the prodigal son where men scowl at the reprobate; they will sympathize with sheep gone astray where the learned cry out a wolf; they will welcome a brother and sister in petto, though they may have never heard that Roman term, where the grave and formal denounce an alien for the eternal years.

CHAPTER XIV.

HERE will they sit down to-day? where are they fond of sitting? Perhaps we shall hear for answer, that they are chiefly fond of running about, hopping as light as bird from brier; though sometimes, when tired, they will perch among the bushes. Well, then, for this chapter, we must take up with any spot where they can be prevailed on to rest for a while. The fortuitous

sod of Horace, with its background of weeds and hawthorns, must serve for a bower. So come now, Jack,

"Et, si quid cessare potes, requiesce sub umbra."

Here's a marvellous convenient place for our assembly. This green plot shall be our carpet; and if you want grand company, here are in great abundance, and actually at your feet, "lords and ladies," with whom you can play till you are tired, for their beauty will reward you for your trouble in looking at what's within them; and you must know that, unlike many of their human namesakes, they have the property of evolving heat; so that these amiable plants will be very appropriate society for us who dislike intensely what is frigid, even though it were what is called "good company."

It won't do for us, as graduates or pupils in the Children's Bower, to dwell too long uninterruptedly on serious subjects. Now and then they do very well to mix up with its lighter lessons; and we shall even set ourselves later to prove that they agree with it, and are strictly appropriate to our audience. But, at present, by way of refreshing our spirits after the last severe trial of them, and, as it were, pulling back some dark boughs to let the sunshine stream in again on us, it will be highly expedient to drop grave matters, and proceed to talk a little of gay light things, the gayer and lighter the better; and though I do not promise, like Chaucer, that

"I wil with lusty herte freisch and grene,
Say yow a song to glade yow, I wene,"

yet, to use his words, "let us stynt of ernestful matiere." So come, let us be seated.

"Here the bright daisy and blue violet glow,
Here western winds on breathing roses blow."

Now then we shall have a very easy pleasant lesson, and the subject shall be, the instruction that can be derived by grown-up people, respecting language itself and conversation, from the kind of prattle that goes on here. But, alas! why talk of pleasant lessons, when I foresee that I shall be cheated through this chapter, as indeed, to let the secret out, I am in one sense

through the whole book? yes, cheated, as far as concerns this life, with poor Fancy's followers, the very idlest coinage of the brain.

"As, in Agrippa's magic glass,
The loved and lost arose to view,
Remembered groves in greenness grew,
Bathed still in childhood's morning dew,
Along whose bowers of beauty swept
Whatever Memory's mourners wept;
Sweet faces which the charnel kept,
Young gentle eyes, which long had slept;
And while the gazer leaned to trace,
More near, some dear familiar face,
He wept to find the vision flown—
A phantom and a dream alone*."

But this concerns not the reader. Let us proceed.

It must be a very humiliating thing to philosophers, and a very incredible thing for many grown-up persons, to hear that all the languages which have hitherto existed in the world have derived their origin from plebeian popular use, and that in their primal usage and form they are more in accordance with child-like views than with those of men advanced to maturity, who wish to substitute different conceptions for them. Words, however inscrutable their origin or varied by subsequent separations, are near relations even of the body, having been formed from observation of effects produced by the tongue and the roof of the mouth, to assimilate sounds in a childlike way to the things that were to be expressed. The application of languages to philosophic purposes was altogether, as Dugald Stewart himself remarks, out of the view of those men who first employed them; and their application to the worldly-wise purposes of adults presents a serious difficulty, which has, in fact, never yet been quite got over, though custom prevents us from observing it. Wilkins and a few others have attempted to form a philosophical language, but hitherto, wise people tell us, such labours have been without success. Politicians, economists, moralists, and modern theologians of a new school, wishing to ignore or per-

* Whittier.

vert all antiquity, have been great proficients as far as exertions went in getting rid of the childlike element; but their success has not surpassed those who were dissatisfied with the popular ingredients. Accordingly, here we have all these languages far better suited to the innocence, and simplicity, and faith, and manners of the bower, than to the schools of science or to the cabinets of politicians. The statesman is obliged to talk at times like Alice and Harry; and, as Vincent Bourne remarks, "we need not hesitate to call the child's A B C Newton's Principia. The child or youth in some instances seems even to have been the custom introducer of names as he still continues to be often the 'nominum institutor.' It is not the sophists who enrich language; it is the popular and boyish aptitude for finding out some natural propriety of appellation which often gives rise to terms and expressions. It is youth which seems to know how to give a name to a thing correctly, though men and gods, as Plato would say, might call it differently *."

However, as we are not going to write like Frederick Schlegel, on the philosophy of speech, we must be content with this wise prelude, and proceed to the light gay matters that we promised to discuss.

"Conversation is a charming talent, but," adds an elegant author, "it becomes every day more rare. We all of us now write." Nevertheless, in the bower, there continues to be no want of voices that might often recall the art as flourishing in its best days, but without its dangers, and free from its defects, though to prove my position we might have some scruples in invading their privacy, especially when we think of the song—

> "Inquire not what their talk may be,
> Nor laugh, you idle scorner;
> But be assur'd, whate'er they say,
> They're happy in the corner."

What is to be learned from children's confabulation, and from the language generally of young people? Three very agreeable and very important lessons, namely, to avoid affectation, to avoid what we may designate as worldly-wise talk, and to avoid

* Cratylus.

uncharitable, unkind talk. Let us see how truly all this can be affirmed.

Affectation is a besetting sin with grown-up people in their conversation, as well as in their writings, though it may pass unnoticed by persons like Congreve's Scandal, who knew "no effectual difference between continued affectation and reality." It wears of course many forms. Ruskin denounces the vanity manifested by "the Pharisees of art, who make religious art the expression of their own perpetual self-complacency, congratulating themselves day by day on their purities, proprieties, elevations, and inspirations, as above the reach of common mortals, pouring contempt upon them, because they like plain pictures of plain things." Then, amongst grown-up people, there is the affectation which prevents them from naming common things in a common way, so as to render their conversation, to say the least of it, very ineffective. They are not like the young in that respect, to whom, as the same author would say, nothing is small, and nothing large; but like Dante, who can with equal and unoffended vision take in the sum of the world —Straw-street and the seventh heavens—in the same instant. The young would never think it vulgar to name any thing which was a fact in the matter that they had to tell of. "No man in this fashionable London of yours," says a great author, "speaks a plain word to me. Every man feels bound to be something more than plain; to be pungent withal, witty, ornamental. His poor fraction of sense has to be perked into some epigrammatic shape, that it may prick into me, perhaps to be topsyturvied, that I may remember it the better. Such grinning inanity is very sad to the soul of man. Human faces should not grin on one like masks; they should look on one like faces*." Then, to look on the less grave side, the faults of language itself used by such grown people. Milton prefers, to the common names Rhine and Danube, Rhene and the Danaw. This style may not be imitated in conversation, but there are plenty of very learned and clever men and women who will say with Biron, "How low soever the matter, I hope in God for high words." Madame de Sevigné says of Madame de Frênoi,

* Carlyle, Past and Present.

"Il est impossible de se la représenter parlant communément et d'affection sur quelque chose." Commonly, of course, is vulgar, and affectionately, childish; so she gets rid, as far as she can, of both the elements of human language.

Plato ascribes the spoiling of words and names to the pride and vanity of those desirous of travestying them in a stilted style *, which is not exactly what young people want to do when they play with them; and, indeed, the corruptions of languages can never be traced to the bower where children and women sit. Evelyn says that they proceed from victories, colonies, staples of commerce, pedantry of schools, affectation of travellers, translations, styles of court, pulpits, political remonstrances, and universities, where such as have lived long "do greatly affect words and expressions no where in use besides." Of late, in England, the diffusion of scientific reports in journals, consequent upon judicial trials, and the very style of the journals themselves, to say nothing of parliamentary language and the House of Commons, have given rise to the worst kind of affectation in language, when, instead of speaking commonly, half-learned people so interlard their discourse with phrases borrowed from the chemist's shop or the scientific lecture-room, that one might think they had swallowed some apothecaries' bills or proclamations, and that, as Webster's Vittoria says, "the hard and undigestible words are thrown up like stones we use give hawks for physic." If it were only to save our ears from such offence, I think the Academy, if we had one like the French, ought to give a prize to children, as when our little May said laughing the other day, when a learned phrase was cited as being often used by a very good man whom she, as every one else, loved dearly, "I declare, for my part, I did not know for a long time what 'animal food' meant." Any thing sounded pleasant from his lips; but after being condemned to sit for some time with a regular scientific phrase-monger, what a relief is it to get back to the bower, ay, or into the bedroom,—"pour ce qui s'appelle raisonner pantoufle!" or into the field, where it seems only crow's language, gabble enough and good enough! Every where thought and affection, passion itself,

* Cratylus.

they turn to favour and to prettiness. Truly, their familiar chat, to say nothing of their song, was

> "Quale sopor fessis in gramine, quale per æstum
> Dulcis aquæ saliente sitim restinguere rivo."

Gerson, though he does not expressly acknowledge it, must have felt the pleasure of children's way of talking, when he speaks of himself as wishing to accommodate his language to theirs. "Let us," he says in one of his works, "talk like them, not greatly minding whether we use or not common vulgar words, though we should have to prattle like mothers and nurses;" and in fact the bower style need fear no contrasts with any other. We hear talk there "far above singing," as Bellario says. How charming were our little John's "jerks of invention," saying, he loved his young governess for being "such a little dumpy thing," saying of her "Here comes my tail," and having a pet name for almost every object in creation. The one he loved best was Nomm, himself Jim Kit. Yet he was fond of his own real names. "Haven't I got a lot of them," he used to say, "and ain't they all pretty ones?" That handful of wit used to repeat with ludicrous gravity the slang phrases of the day,—"all serene," "stunning," "bless you," "all right!" He was full of pretty answers. "You kill me," said his governess to him one day in French, at lessons. "Oh, you had best make me out a Palmer at once, while you are about it!" he archly replied. In general, as Sir Philip Sydney says in one of his sonnets,

> "To hear him speak, and sweetly smile,
> You were in Paradise the while."

Neither he nor his brother could ever catch the tone or words of cant. They could not for the life of them "speak puling like a beggar at Hallowmas." What an escape from formality was it to hear that eldest brother talk! If the matter or occasion require it, no one, I promise you, knows better how to speak with respect and polished correctness. He was then togatus, like the old Roman, "in his tongue, as well as in his wardrobe," to use the expression of Landor; or truly gentle in both, he showed himself as one "full of most excellent differences, and of very soft society." His birth was ancient, nor let it relish of arrogance

to say, his parents' care, with curiousness and cost, had trained him up in all those liberal qualities that commend a gentleman; but when he might play the boy, it was a lively and a common one that he acted. Then he would use street terms, without dreaming that he had caught thereby an epidemic, as elder people qualify such speech, congratulating themselves that they are too cautious and aged to fear such disorders. Then he would boast that some one I cannot name was a "brick," and his friend right "plucky." Then, however quick and excited, no one ever heard fall from him an expression that Sterne could trace from Ernulfus. How he managed it, might puzzle some to guess; but nothing that savoured of an oath or an imprecation ever passed his lips; still I admit that often

> "He had lever talken with a page
> Than to commune with any sophist wight,
> Though he might leren sophistry aright."

Truly, one line at least of old Chaucer may stand without much change when applied to him:

> "For of his speaking I had gret deinte."

He reminded one of Ralph, and the delight of the goodwife at hearing him rattle away, which she seemed to think the climax of enjoyment, when proposing the plot of the play he ought to act, which was to end by Ralph being let talk with the king's daughter: "Then let Ralph talk with her!" He was not like the laureate of the Cæsars, who desired for his model some one

> "——— cui non sit publica vena,
> Qui nihil expositum soleat deducere, ne qui
> Communi feriat carmen triviale moneta,"

though he resembled him in wishing for companion one who loved to haunt the woods, and to drink from the fountains of the nymphs of Aonia. Lamb might have said of him, "He thoroughly penetrates into the ridiculous, wherever found; understands the first time (a great desideratum in some minds), you need never twice speak to him; does not want explanations, translations, limitations, when you make an assertion; up to any thing; down to every thing, whatever 'sapit hominem,' a

young man perfect*." A celebrated author remarks, that those who belong "to the true and great group, are continually touching what to the others appear vulgarities, and that as the grotesque, besides being a most natural manner of expression, springing from a tendency to playfulness in minds highly comprehensive of truth, can be an instrument of teaching, it were desirable that what is suggested in times of play, and even in street gibing, might not be suffered to evaporate in daily talk, but might be fixed and expressed in the arts of sculpture and illumination, as," he adds, "they would have been in the thirteenth century." Many of these current and jocose phrases are, after all, "the compelled inconsistencies of thoughts too great to be well sustained or clearly uttered." Other expressions, hugely criminal in a court of grammar, please the young from being associated with an idea of the innocence of the sweet, poor, common lips that utter them, as when they reply smiling, "Yes, they be," and as in the song, "It ain't no use," and even if they have been in Worcestershire, "Her'n will." The bower cannot be expected to be more rigid than the Academy, which "accepts and crowns the provincialisms of a poet, seeming to abdicate its charge of guardian to the national tongue, while honouring the living voice of popular childhood, and the vulgar language of a class whose expressions of noble and warm-hearted thought are too often disdained †." Of great wits, as well as of children, De Foe is "the darling," and yet, as Lamb remarks, "his chief work is written in phraseology peculiarly adapted to the lower conditions of readers;" hence it is an especial favourite with poor boys, servant-maids, &c. Lamb himself, I suppose it will be granted, was not a vulgar talker, and yet he could delight even in writing such phrases as "You are worst of nights, an't you?" "You never was rack'd, was you ‡?" Nay, what will astonish you perhaps more, the Duc de Saint-Simon, in one of his admirable portraits, representing the Duchesse de Chaulnes at the most polished court on earth, after saying that she had an exquisite politeness, with the air and the reality of a very great lady in whatever place she might be, adds, "She

* Letters, 113. † Villemain, Rapports académiques, 1852.
‡ Letters.

often used the phrases of the lower classes, and 'les mots du bas peuple*.'" Our Thomas at all events, who had been abroad as much as any man without ever making the least show of it in his discourse, never talking of Pont-Neuf, Paris, and the Louvre, or using "the polite French word in his conversation," loved to speak the "base good Englis," as Wycherley's Monsieur complains, "with the commune home-bred pronunciation." In fact, young people, when thrown amongst foreigners, or those who ape their manners, will try now and then to give archly a turn of their own to what ever sounds extraordinary, as when there came a Persian ambassador to London, Shaw Ali Mirza, and the common people called him Shaw Nonsense. They will often take refuge in street terms, partly indeed their own creation, as furnishing a kind of home of homes, a region defended by barriers impassable to all but natives, where they can feel at ease, and run riot in spite of those critics who may have exhausted their patience with over doses of politeness, precision, and formality. The talk of boys and that of their elders has, on these occasions, dissimilitudes which might recall the line of Homer:

"Whom gods call Xanthus, but Scamander men."

It has however, I admit, other dissimilitudes of more importance to excite the attention of those who love their country, with its purest and most noble associations, and it is on different ground that I would suggest the fact, that when we think of what is most worthy of love and respect, it is often in the Children's Bower, if one may venture to say so, more than elsewhere, that we feel ourselves in England.

Then again from the prattle of girls, how much unaffected sympathy may be learned with the whole of nature! What a lesson of affection could be had from observing the care of a certain little sister for her dicky-bird! For my part, I should hardly be shocked if I were to hear of some one in the old way accepting her innocent words as so many omens. L. Paullus, the consul appointed to command in the war against King Perses, returning to his house the same evening, and finding his

* Mém. ii. 247.

little daughter Tertia very sad, asked, kissing her, what was the matter. "Mi pater," she replied, "Persa periit." Then he said, embracing her, "Daughter, I accept the omen." Persa was a puppy dog, who had just died.

Children, in the same manner as the lower classes, generally express themselves most figuratively. Nature in them speaks in strong images, though never such as affected people use. If, for instance, they have to describe their fright in a thunder-storm, they will make you laugh perhaps by comparing the sound to the noise of tin pots, knocked about over their heads. That's stilted enough for them. They also easily catch and retain those proverbs and popular sentences, which, as St. Augustin remarks, "comprise often salutary instruction *." Their sly and acute remarks might even sometimes recall the exquisitely subtle style of an academic eulogium. But this does not interrupt the current of simplicity in expression, which is the ordinary characteristic of their language. To borrow the words of a great author, we may say that they take minutes to tell things plainly, while their elders often take days to tell them unintelligibly. Rhetoricians, like Rollin, when praising a certain purity of style arising from ingenuous thought, observe that it is such as we find in a child that has intelligence. In fact, a great deal of literature is but dry and very insipid rubbish when compared with the prattle of such children; and one might say to its adepts,

> "Hush, idle fancy, with thy needless art,
> Speak from thy fountains, O thou throbbing heart."

St. Thomas of Aquin, in his prayer before study, uses the words "Thou who makest eloquent the tongues of children," and in fact there are not wanting instances to prove, that by imitating their common daily language, a certain degree even of literary success may be obtained; for it is much to tell plainly; and they always penetrate with a glance to the heart of the thing, which is more than we find effected by some orators, even where they wore mantles "with some twenty or five-and-twenty yards of good purple, superfine, marketable cloth in them,—with large

* In Ps. xxxii.

flowing folds and doubles, and in a great style of design." Speaking of the ballad of the Children in the Wood, a writer in the Spectator says, "There is in this little song a despicable simplicity in the verse, and yet because the sentiments appear genuine and unaffected, they are able to move the mind of the most polite reader with inward meltings of humanity and compassion. The whole narrative is very moving, notwithstanding the author of it has delivered it in such an abject phrase and poorness of expression, that the quoting any part of it would look like a design of turning it into ridicule; but it will please those who, while judges of language, have a true and unprejudiced taste of nature. But those only who are endowed with a true greatness of soul and genius, can divest themselves of the little images of ridicule, and admire nature in her simplicity and nakedness." This is much, coming from a fine writer at that time, when the justice of the grounds of this eulogium were much less generally felt than they will be at the present day.

But this is a theme that I cannot do justice to. The best way is for every one to run to the bower, and he will soon feel the charm of its "russet yeas, and honest kersey noes," supplying the use of three-pil'd hyperboles, spruce affectation, figures pedantical, and all the other tricks of ostentation. All will do wisely to accept its invitation, when they hear sung

> "Fancy's children, here we dwell:
> Welcome, ladies, to our cell.
> Here the wren of softest note,
> Builds its nest and warbles well;
> Here the blackbird strains his throat;
> Welcome, lordlings, to our cell."

So much then for that matter,—the absence of affectation in the use of words.

But we said that grown-up people might learn from what passes in the Children's Bower, to avoid worldly-wise talk, made up as it is of those really idle words for which we are told they will have one day to give an account, where there will not be much to keep them in countenance. This is the point to which our attention must now be directed.

The latter years of Louis XIV., it is said, opened the most

brilliant era of conversation. No doubt there was an immense charm in those reunions of the old French society, when subjects of the most elevated kind were not excluded, but rather invoked as a background for the most brilliant sallies of cheerfulness and wit. Some idea of it may be formed by those who have lived in familiar intimacy with those noble veterans of the ancient court and army and clergy, who have only but yesterday passed away. Their thrilling anecdotes, their frank, kind gaiety, their cheerful returns to the gravest thoughts, all partook of a childlike character, which fascinated and instructed. But that world is gone; and children, at all events, and those who resemble them in respect to character, have not much benefited by the change in the conversation of their visitors.

We all know too well what sort of subjects occupy the conversation of elder people now-a-days in England, when met crowding together to talk "most friendly, yet cunningly," as Pepys says of "my Lord Chancellor," or as he describes elsewhere Sir William Pen, "merry in appearance, being glad to seem at friendship, though hating one another, and knowing it on both sides;" or desiring to shine among those troublesome people, as Lamb terms them, that are called "well-informed men;" or having travelled, to bring home a judgment not to be contradicted, as Beaumel says, or aiming higher still, and seeking to pass for eminently wise; wanting to develop in words, as far as such golden mouths can articulate any, their ideas of comfort, respectability, cleverness, and success. Then we hear pronounce its sentences gravity itself; then we hear confident assurance. Each is like Homer's Jupiter when he nods his head; and we can almost fancy that we hear a voice from Olympus, saying, "It must be so."

> —— *οὐ γὰρ ἐμὸν παλινάγρετον, οὐδ' ἀπατηλὸν,*
> *οὐδ' ἀτελεύτητον, ὅ τι κεν κεφαλῇ κατανεύσω.*

Well, what compliment do they get for it all from any one conversant with the talk that goes on in the bower? I think it won't be more flattering than Hamlet's exclamation,

> "These tedious old fools!"

What's the matter at other times that raises such a storm?

Politics, politics! stark mad with politics! Then some grave foreigner, perhaps, "malade de politique et de raisonnement," as the Duc de Saint-Simon says, takes part; then follow national suspicions, disparagements, enmities,—"Dere was the politique, de Anglise government politique! Oh, dere is the Anglisman now!" What have the young to do with all this? Ambition must be kept in grand apartments, "and is girt with the wild noise of prattling visitants, which makes it lunatic beyond all cure;" though even in such regions some will seem to look to the bower like Pepys, when he wrote in his Diary, "One thing I must observe here, while I think of it, that I am now become the most negligent man in the world as to matter of newes, insomuch that, now-a-days, I neither can tell any, nor aske any of others." But even were there no such characters, what have children, or those that converse with them, to do with endless discussions about things that nobody cares a snap for, except as far as their own vanity is concerned, and with persons often that nobody cares a snap for, excepting as far as the vanity or the selfishness of their acquaintances may be concerned? So the young, like the common people, will sit then in solemn silence; and sometimes, next to the talk, this silence of youth is one of the most charming things imaginable. If you will only imitate it, you will fancy and feel yourself young too. While their elders are giving vent to their sharp, unkind perceptions or rash judgments of every thing and every body, young people, like persons of the common sort, sit still so unmoved, and with such unknowing, innocent faces, that you cannot help loving them for being evidently behindhand in such matters, and uninterested about them. There is a worth, even a sort of comeliness in their honest ignorance, which it were a great pity to exchange for knowledge. Their inability to converse, then, seems to be quite a privilege of their nature. That they are made uneasy, fidgety, and uncomfortable by such talk may sometimes indeed be true, as is clear from their furtive glances and sly smiles, apropos of nothing. Perhaps they will fear ever to say to the grand, wise company,

> "How longe tyme wol ye reken and cast
> Your sommes, and your bokes, and your thinges?
> The devel have part of alle such rekenynges;"

but they will slily comfort their fellows, saying, "Come, we'll have a song out anon by ourselves. Father and the gentlemen are in sad talk, and we'll not trouble them." Many a sensible person may wish to be after them; for as Careless says, "If a man must endure the noise of words without sense, I think they and the women have more musical voices, and become nonsense better." Children's little tattle can remind men that the world is filled with things which they will enjoy, unless, as a great author says, "they are too proud to be pleased by them, or too grasping to care for what they cannot turn to other account than mere delight, forgetting that the most beautiful things in the world are the most useless *." Unless called to the administration of public affairs, grown-up persons might derive some benefit from participating in the juvenile state, in regard to which, the fluctuation of the funds, the rate of exchange, and the whole science of the financial world appear to be only so much glamoury. Without any loss of general esteem, the Cardinal d'Estrées seems to have possessed all through life the distastes of the young for monetary talk, though this did not prevent his not being in any one's debt for a shilling at his death. Pressed and tormented by his agent and his steward to audit their accounts, he at last consented to give them a day. They required that he should deny himself to all visitors. He with difficulty consented; then on second thoughts made a stipulation, that if Cardinal Bonzi, his friend and confrère, should call, he at least should not be prevented entering. Immediately he despatched a secret messenger, begging of him to come to him as if uninvited on such a day, and at the very hour he had appointed for beginning business. When the time came, his men of affairs arrived, and covered the table of his study with their papers. He talked a little wildly, and kept looking towards the window, sighing secretly for his deliverance. Soon a carriage drove into the court. The men of money began to inveigh against the Swiss for having admitted it; but the Cardinal said it could be no one else but his friend, who was excepted in the interdict, as it speedily proved to be on his being announced, when the men of business had to bundle up their

* The Stones of Venice.

papers, and withdrew muttering, while the two friends laughed heartily together; and never since that day, says Saint-Simon, were his agents able to catch him again *.

But to return to the bower birds in presence of human cleverness elsewhere.

For a wonder, there is no discussion perhaps about politics, or the funds, or great alliances; but still, what have young people to do with all these chawed jests, these ends of mouldy lampoons, and all this talk about matters from which love, imagination, hope, and felicity, in any true sense of the terms, are rigidly and for ever excluded? These tedious old fools,—that's all they deserve to hear. There is a time for all things; but when not at lessons, wise men may, like children,

> "—— hate that man that makes acquaintance nice,
> And still discreetly plagues them with advice;
> Who moves by caution and mature delays,
> And must give reasons for whate'er he says.
> The man, indeed, whose converse is so full,
> Makes them attentive, but it makes them dull."

Let us leave this worshipful society, and follow the children out of doors, for their nothing's more than matter. Let us be off, and take their wagships with us, the whole cluster of them.

From the young your people of wit and genius might learn again, that politeness is but a poor substitute for friendship, and that the use of language was not to disguise their thoughts. The same influence might render them ashamed of choosing always to be of the party that they heard the present company condemn. The young tell all that they know, and are easily induced to listen with deference to the opinions of others. They have a bold, half-impudent way of their own of expressing admiration even for the sublimest passages which are submitted to them. When they come to the last line of Faber's immortal book, the Creator and the Creature, and read "non confundar in æternum!" they, as reviewers, would think it quite enough to say, "Ay, I believe you, 'twas needless to tell us that." Their aptitude to admire more than can be spoken of at once, will often, I admit, cause sudden interruptions to the topic of

* Saint-Simon, t. xi. 265.

conversation, as when my Uncle Toby said all of a sudden, "I wish you had seen what prodigious armies we had in Flanders!" which wish did such a disservice to the Doctor, who had been talking, that it quite confounded him, putting his ideas first into confusion and then to flight, so that he could not rally them again for the soul of him. To be sure, young people's chat together is not always very profound; at least it is not intended to be so; and yet even their idlest questions are sometimes suggestive. When common lads meet in the street, they always ask each other, "Where are you going?" Neither Ralph, even when enacting the right courteous and valiant knight of the Burning Pestle, nor his squire Tim, the elder 'prentice, can leave off their old habits in this respect; and so their question is, "Sir, my master sent me to know whither you are riding?" which hasty utterance is corrected by the other, who tells him to say, "Fair sir, the right courteous knight commanded me to inquire upon what adventure you are bound?" The matter is not much changed, you see. The boy's question will still be put; and the wisest might do well to address a similar one each day to themselves; ay, even so, Where are you going? Perhaps it might prove, only with better results, like the conference between Sterne and the French commissary, of which we read, "'Who are you?' said he, 'Don't puzzle me,' said I." If they can give a direct answer as readily as our lads and children, it is mighty well, I promise you. Then how pregnant sometimes are the replies of the young! Propose any question before little John. With what a sharp-provided wit he reasons! and all the while what gentleness in their tone, how innocent in their remarks! From this eldest boy, for example, no one ever heard a proud or a disdainful word, or an expression purposely equivocal, or an allusion bordering in the most remote degree on indelicacy either of thought or of utterance. But we shall be asked, what can be your themes, when matters of worldly interest, as you call it, are excluded? Come and you shall hear them,

> "Where we shall sit together unmolested,
> And words of true love pass from tongue to tongue,
> As singing birds from one bough to another."

Here is little John, and, as Thamasta says,

"He talks the prettiest stories; he delivers
His tales so gracefully, that I could sit
And listen, nay, forget my meals and sleep,
To hear his neat discourses."

Ah, thou truant, runaway! how this bower smiled when thy sweet voice was heard in it! Alas! that such a change should be, and that it should now languish in such dreary guise!

"As looks a garden of its beauty spoil'd,
As wood in winter by rough Boreas soil'd;
As portraits raz'd of colours use to be,
So look these abject bounds depriv'd of thee!"

In the society of children and young people no one wants such subjects as fill the columns of the daily journal, the perusal of which renders after all, in common times, no great service to the mind. But there is no lack of matter for conversation, if you only have a taste for what is fresh, natural, and suggestive. So our little hosts will invite us in, and say,

"Come back to your mother, ye children, for shame,
Who have wandered like truants, for riches or fame!
With a smile on her face, and a sprig in her cap,
She calls you to feast from her bountiful lap.
Come you of the law who can talk, if you please,
Till the man in the moon will allow it's a cheese;
You clerks, on whose ear are a couple of pens,
And whose head is an ant-hill of units and tens;
Though Plato denies you, we welcome you still
As a featherless biped, in spite of your quill.
Then come from all parties and parts to our feast;
Though not just the richest, we'll give you at least
A bite at an apple, a seat on the grass,
And the best of old—water—at nothing a glass *."

How little John would laugh after singing to you this invitation! Genius and wisdom agree with young people after all, in finding these tiny unpretending subjects the best, not alone for simple recreation, but even at times for soothing the troubles of the heart. In the endearing conversation of his children,

* Holmes.

Cicero tells us, he used to drop all his cares, and relieve himself from all his struggles in the senate and the forum. The child's story recalls to man his happiest years—

> "Dear to his age are memories such as these,
> Leaves of his June in life's autumnal breeze;
> Such were the tales that won his boyish ear,
> Told in low tones that evening loves to hear*."

In fine, from the conversations of the bower men can learn to avoid the breach of charity, which is a lesson that may very reasonably be classed among the branches of "useful knowledge;" for really when persons offend in this way, it is as often through a want of instruction as through malice.

The child, conversing secretly with God,—and how many secrets pass between them!—has the property described in the words of the book of Wisdom, "Non habet amaritudinem conversatio illius, nec tædium convictus illius." How painful, through its bitterness, is often the talk of others! "It is sad," says the Père Boutauld, "that among customs divinely instituted among us, and that nature and grace have established, there should not be one that is infected with so many faults as this of conversation, or one more shamefully corrupted. In the world," he says, "we don't know at the age of sixty how we ought to converse." Among grown persons, as every one knows, are tongues

> "That speak reproachfully, not caring where nor when,
> And speak licentious words and hateful things
> Of good and bad alike, of low and hie."

Sir Harry Wildair might well say, "Were there but a round tax laid upon scandal, we men of figure would find it much heavier than four shillings in the pound." So describing her days at Vitré, Madame de Sevigné, casting a penetrating glance a little sarcastic at the society around her, says, "Nous rions un peu de notre prochain. Il est plaisant ici le prochain, particulièrement quand on a diné." Then, as in "All's well that ends well," we hear, "Believe it, my lord, in mine own direct knowledge, without any malice; but to speak of him

* Holmes.

as my kinsman, he's the owner of no one good quality." With people at all advanced in life, be their character and habit what it may, the object of conversation often seems to be to lower, with a safe conscience, in some way or other, every absent friend or acquaintance in the estimation of the company, and to do this, as Sir Nathaniel says, "in the fear of God, and very religiously." If they do not quite come up to the pitch of the mother of Hendicourt, who used to mangle all characters, either in jest or earnest, and who had always some overwhelming "mais" when she heard any one spoken well of before the king, these respectable speakers, who carry scruples on other points to a degree hardly credible, have the secret after all of succeeding this way conscientiously, and might close their conversations, which are to pass for cheerful, by saying with Belinda, "Nay, we have spared nobody, I swear." Such persons often come together like the coroner's inquest, to sit upon the murdered reputations of the week. And it is not without reason I said, that be their character what it may, many grown-up persons contract this habit of detraction; for without appealing to daily experience, we have only to hear the Duc de Saint-Simon relating an instance. "It happens," he says, "sometimes to the best men to deify certain passions, such is the weakness of man. I was greatly attached to M. de la Trappe; I was intimate with M. de Beauvilliers and with M. de Chevreuse: they concealed nothing from me; and sometimes bitter words escaped them relative to M. de la Trappe, which I would rather not have heard." The abbot's confidential letter to Bossuet respecting "the maxims of the saints" had been published, and hence the animosity of these pious protectors of Fénélon. "I remember one day," he continues, "that having dined with M. de Beauvilliers, he proposed to take a drive with M. de Chevreuse, the Duc de Bethune, and me, round the canal of Fontainebleau. We had not been long in the carriage, when the good man, Bethune, began to talk of M. de la Trappe. The two others followed, and the whole three loosened the bridle and set off at such a rate, that after answering a little, then keeping silence not to excite them more, I felt I could not bear it any longer, so I said that I was aware at my age it was not for me to bid them hold their

tongues, but that at any age one might get out of a carriage, and that I prayed them therefore to let me alight, that they might have full liberty to continue the conversation *." The spirit of the Children's Bower imparts to social intercourse a very different tone from all this. Some one says, that clever sayings are almost always unkind. With grown persons the observation is true; but with the young clever sayings are genial, full of innocent mirth and good companionship—that's a difference to note—and a lesson that may be profitable to those who would shine in the select circles. "Sapiens in verbis seipsum amabilem fecit." A child in this respect is the wise one *κατ' ἐξοχήν*. Little John was never known to have uttered a word capable of disparaging any one absent, or of grieving and disobliging any one present. He was not wholly without experience of rough voices, "sed responsio mollis frangit iram;" and his was the soft, sweet, humble answer that put out the fire in an instant. The spirit of the bower is like that described by the Père Boutauld. It prompts "to speak readily, not to speak much; to be able to keep silence; to join in grave and elevated discourses,"—yes, I cite these words quite awake,—"when invited to do so; to know how to laugh well with those who laugh, and never to wound any one while laughing; to know how to mix true civility with play and raillery, and to strike a playmate only just as hard as is required for caressing and honouring him †." All this, which you can partly witness every day in the street, was seen exemplified in this eldest brother. Brave as a lion, he never had a quarrel, however loud he shouted, *μακροῦ ἀΰσας*, contending, though not indeed like Homer's heroes,

——— *ὁππότε κοῦροι ἐρίσσειαν περὶ μύθων.*

With respect to uncharitable subjects of discourse, the spirit and genius of the bower, as we have already observed, supplies boys and girls, and all who like them, with other topics. It was impossible to have lived for any time with Thomas without contracting a hatred for the polished defamation usual in good company, for all ill-natured criticism of others which constitutes the atmosphere of pedants, for all high-flown eulogies

* Mém. tom. ii. 133. † Les Conseilles de la Sagesse.

armed like a snake with a sting in their tail in the form of a "but"—the artifice of some ascetics. "Our neighbour" was safe at all hours where he could venture to interpose. He maligned no one by asking questions with an innocent air; he searched into the life of no man or woman; but like the Cid with his Babiéca, he would talk or think after dinner about his horses Doctor and Peggy, and whether their saddles and straps were all right. Similarly we read of a young student at St. Acheul, Jules Quinque, that he would never allow persons to judge or condemn the absent even when these were in the wrong. He would then become their advocate and undertake their apology; and he used often to end by making people praise those whom they had blamed at first. So also Auguste Hallez, of the same college, would never allow persons to censure others behind their backs, or to criticise them, or notice their faults. He used to turn off the conversation to some other subject, or would cease to take part in it.

But we need not continue or multiply instances of this kind, which in fact can be supplied by the experience of all persons familiar with the conversation of the young. We can learn from it, therefore, to realize what the Père Boutauld says is the object and property of wisdom, by rendering our own conversation like that of the angels, and by feeling all the spiritual joy that results from familiarity with souls that love each other perfectly. The child, as he observes, like the wise man, "has a manner of speaking and of opening his heart to his friends, and ways of laughing and of rejoicing with all the liberty that friendship yields, and that, too, without committing any fault against the rules of respect and modesty. He knows how to give a lustre to the serenity of his countenance, which enchants those with whom he speaks, and which at the same time inspires sentiments of devotion more sweet and powerful, adds the reverent Father, than ever arises in a church, from the savage modesty and self-restraint of scrupulous souls*."

But we must close this chapter. I think the proposition has been abundantly established, and proof supplied, that even from the language of the young, and their choice of subjects

* Les Conseilles de la Sagesse.

for discourse, though they may be somewhat abroad in matters of science, lessons of real practical importance can be derived by men. But half of this, perhaps, you will tell me, was very childish: well, "nunc majora canamus." Still, for all that, mature lordlings, I'll have another pluck at your beards, and show you contrasts that you little dream of.

CHAPTER XV.

OU ask me where the Bower is to be held to-day, after leading me blindfolded to this spot. There is certainly a smell of sweet hay, though I feel no pleasant breeze playing round my temples as from an open field. I hear a chain rattling, and corn shaken in a sieve. Oh, you story! So actually, Jack, it is in the stable you would have us sit next, and I suppose you are to be feeding brother's mare, as usual, all the while. Well, I see you will for once have it all your own way, and exchange the laurels for the manger. As it happens, the scene is not so ill laid—horses and chivalry are associated—and we are about to hear of something that has a great deal to do with chivalry, as far as it comprises a permanent attribute of human nature.

There are certain inspirations to be obtained in the Children's Bower, which few strangers are prepared to find in it; and among these, after a little observation, one need not hesitate to place courage; for though the power of bodily resistance may not seem great, the will and the admiration, and often the acts themselves, are not wanting there.

As we professedly introduced the last subject, in order to form an interruption to the gravity of the matters previously discussed, so here, with the same object, I ask permission to retrace my steps a little, and without heeding what the order of these suggestions might demand, to cast, as it were, a last

look back upon the purely serene and smiling hours that we have passed in the bower, that we may be invigorated by the retrospect to proceed to what remains, of which the seriousness, though blended with sweet hope, and though still removed from us by the space of some chapters, seems already to forecast its shadow. Borrowing the words of a great artist, I would say, though our sun is still above the hills, we can discern "those gray passages about the horizon, where, seen through its dying light, the cool and the gloom of night gather themselves for their victory." Heedless of these, your Londoners love to cast one or two last looks towards the setting sun and the distant lake of gold, which have enchanted them from the top of Hampstead Heath, before they descend to the plains which are already in the shade. It is with the same feeling that I would ask you to stay a few minutes longer here, and look once more at what has so well represented the ephemeral happiness of this life.

The courage of youth is a bright thing to contemplate. In Moldavian ballads a prince threatens a maiden with the fate of Mazeppa, unless she give him a kiss. The horse is brought, and it paws and snorts. She still refuses; and the prince marries her. The innocent, the simple, and the just are almost necessarily brave. Hence it is, no doubt, that courage is so highly appreciated in the Children's Bower. Justice, indeed, for the instinct of which young persons are so remarkable, unavoidably involves, at least, moral courage. "Justice," says St. Augustin, "is the greatest of virtues, and for this reason; other virtues give joy to the possessor; but justice gives more to others than to him who practises it. Justice befriends the miserable; it has no regard to persons; knows neither brother, nor mother, nor father: it knows only truth; it imitates God*."

The author of the book entitled Recollections of St. Acheul, speaking of one of the young students, Jules Quinque, remarks, that whatever wore the semblance of injustice was odious to him. What will not boys undergo rather than conceal such feelings! Men might learn from them to practise an unflinch-

* In Ps. xiv.

ing and indomitable spirit on many occasions, where they are too apt to want it, or at least to speak and act as if they wanted it. A chief of the Marsians admitted to hospitality in the house of Drusus, amused himself by asking a child of four years, M. Porcius Cato, to support the cause of the Italians. The little boy refused; he was offered playthings and sweetmeats, still he refused. At last the Marsian, piqued at his conduct, held him from the window by the leg, and again demanded his assent, threatening to cast him headlong unless he yielded. But he would not yield, and the menaces were as fruitless as the caresses. This instance, of course, is familiar to your Latin scholars; but are we to forget all the examples of heroism in the young Christian martyrs, when the same spirit was evinced for the cause of highest justice? Of the courage of boys in defence of wronged innocence, there is a memorable instance related by Nauclerus in his chronicles, when Henry, emperor of Germany, the son of Conrad, falsely accused and proposed to kill—instigante diabolo—his wife, who was daughter of the king of England, and a lad offered himself as her champion. As another instance might be cited, perhaps, the memorable event in the time of Pope Innocent III., when twenty thousand French boys left their country and followed a little leader whom they all admired, proceeding not to win spoils or glory, or attend to any earthly interest, but to the rescue, as they hoped, of the Holy Land. The courage inspired by faith is a quality of the young that might be caught, perhaps, by admiring its effects in all they do and say.

> "They cannot dread created might, who love
> God the Creator!—fair and lofty thought!
> It lifts and swells their heart*!"

When King Richard threatened the Abbot Samson, the latter replied, "The king has force and power to do his pleasure; but I, for my part, never can be bent to wish this that he seeks. 'Videat Altissimus.' Let the Most High look on it. Whatsoever thing shall befall, I will patiently endure." "Such was his deliberate decision," adds a commentator; "why not? Cœur-de-

* Coleridge.

lion is very dreadful, but not the dreadfullest, 'videat Altissimus*.'" Such is the spirit, too, of the Children's Bower. Religion requiring almost at all times, and especially in youth, moral courage, supplies those who embrace it with a calm and sustained energy. "Melior est patiens viro forti." "Courage," says the Père Boutauld, "includes two virtues—force and patience;" and, though but little observed in them, both are found in the young. St. Augustin points out the need of the latter, the peril and the remedy, in words that must prove very impressive to men advanced in life; saying, "He who has not succeeded in corrupting you by promises, will have recourse, perhaps, to menaces; he will be your enemy. I will teach you," he says; "I will show you; you shall have me ever at your side. Now, when he sought you by promises, it was the morning that shone upon you. This morning by these menaces changes into evening, and this evening makes you sad; but He who has preserved you against the deceitful sweetness of the morning, and found you a way to escape, will also find you one for the evening. 'Exitus matutini et vespere delectabis,' said David, addressing God. As the light which God diffused on your soul has caused you to despise the false brilliancy of the morning of this world, despise likewise the sadness of this evening by remembering the sufferings of the Saviour. Say to yourself, What can do this man, who threatens me, more terrible than what my Saviour has endured for me†?"

The courage and the sense of justice belonging to youth are proof against that human respect which causes so many grown-up people to show so vilely, as if wearing the slavelike cut of hair in their souls, as Plato says the women would say. There is no trace in the Gospels or in tradition of childhood or youth having been led away to join in the outcry of the world against our Lord, and reject Him. Their poor little triumph which they had arranged for Him on Palm Sunday, turned out, indeed, in the end, very differently from what they expected; but for aught we can discover they seem, by their subsequent absence and their silence, to have felt that they were themselves in con-

* Carlyle. † In Ps. lxiv.

sequence involved in the shame and ignominy of the Passion. Perhaps, if we except a few of the more dissolute with whom dramatic writers were most familiar, the same observation respecting the conduct of youth might have been made, when, in the sixteenth century, He was attacked in the person of his Spouse. But to come down to present times. Who are in general the persons in this country, or in the distant missions of which we read in the "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi,"—who are the first to be converted to a course that brings with it sarcasm, reproach, loss of friends, loss of influence, loss sometimes of property, loss of all means of advancement, often loss of all fields for the exercise of their talents, while, in some regions, of life itself? It is young men and women, boys, maidens, sometimes even children. No human respect, even in little things which are often the cause of most danger from it, weighs with youth. Ferdinand Egret, a student of St. Acheul, knowing how ready some persons were to ridicule his devotion, went to the principal church of the place where he was residing on Maundy Thursday, and prayed in a most conspicuous place. When presented with instances of unconscious independence, it is difficult not to be reminded of little John, that boy of spirit so unflinching when it was an occasion of showing his faith, so full of lofty, delicate, honourable thoughts—thoughts you might almost have fancied too high for one so tender.

But even without ascribing their courage to a supernatural motive, we may remark that men might learn a certain high bearing from the young,—to follow all through life a noble fearless line of conduct, and to turn to a lofty, moral, and intellectual purpose the energy of a finely constituted nature.

Children and young people generally are little troubled about the taunts and condemnations of the profane, whether in political power or in subservience to it,

> "Wise nature's darlings, they live in the world,
> Perplexing not themselves how it is hurl'd*."

In many relations we must become children to be men. Their

* Drummond.

exemption from human respect makes them bold where their elders often grow bewildered and faltering. Trifles often show what is in our nature. One day Thomas was taken to visit the Archbishop of Paris at St. Germain-en-Laye. He was intimate there, being a favourite companion of the prelate's nephew, whom he tried to initiate in the whole science of horsemanship. Pausing at the gate before following his party up stairs, some persons of the household called his attention to an Englishman who was passing on the other side of the street. It happened to be a most learned and holy man, who, like many of his college, was a little careless as to his exterior. He was now pointed out in terms not very respectful. "Comment!" exclaimed the young visitor, "c'est mon ami intime," indicating by his look and tone that he was proud of him.

Mature manhood, with all its beard of Hercules and frowning Mars, assuming valour's excrement to render itself redoubted, cannot on every occasion dispense with such assistance as can be derived in this respect from the spirit of the Children's Bower, which Plato would describe as implying movement, a rushing on; which is so profitable, that he thinks the very word to express profitable, λυσιτελοῦν, to be derived from the not suffering things to stand still, or to cease, or the movement to come to an end, but the freeing them; while the spirit opposed to that of youth, or vice, κακία, he derives from κακῶς ἰόν, moving on badly,—the whole of depravity consisting in going on badly, the walking in a restrained or shackled manner which, when the soul suffers, it becomes full of evil; "for," he adds, "the founder of names appears to have throughout found fault with that which hinders and restrains things from flowing, and therefore αἰσχρόν, base, he composed from ἀεὶ ἴσχον ῥοῦν, ever restraining the flowing; for that which detains and binds is blamed *." Now the courage of youth is only another name for their unrestrained activity towards good; whereas its elders are often fettered and kept back by motives which the young would deem dishonourable or even silly. The man grown up or advanced in years has ugly friends at his elbow sometimes, who suggest a course of their own very different from that which

* Cratylus.

youth will prescribe. As Sterne confesses of himself on one occasion, he has sometimes every dirty passion and bad propensity of his nature,—avarice, caution, discretion, hypocrisy, meanness, and pride,—to stop him and fill him with alarm. He has policy, he has false shame, he has selfish ease, he has doubt to advise a contrary line of action, making him in regard to every subject a father of difficulties without ever being able to find a solution for one of them. Doubt now more and more assails him. Who can be brave when he knows not or cares not what may be the cause in question? Mature age has now too often for its counsellor this doubt.

> "He lookt askew with his mistrustful eyes,
> And nicely trode, as thornes lay in his way,
> Or that the flore to shrinke he did avise;
> And evermore his eyes about him went,
> As if some proved peril he did feare,
> Or did misdoubt some ill, whoes cause did not appeare."

Childhood and youth have no such phantoms as these that beset later life, though they are laughed at for fearing others far more innocent and less likely to misguide. In a general way they are brave. Saint-Simon describes a young man, out of favour at court, conversing with Louis XIV., and the terror inspired in his elders at the mere thought of his boldness. "Nothing," he says, "could equal the surprise and fear of M. de Chevreuse, to whom I related what had passed during my audience with the king; but when he heard that I had said to him, how we knew that he feared all discussion and all decision, he stepped back six paces, and exclaimed, 'You said that to the king, and in those very terms? you were very bold.' You are not bold enough, I replied, you old seigneurs, who are so intimate with him, and in such high favour; and truly it is weak you are, not to dare to say a word to him; for if he listens to me, a mere young man, little accustomed to see him, rather too, for some time back, out of favour with him, and at this moment still more so by reason of a new incident, and if our conversation, begun with anger, finished so well after all what you term my boldness, by his showing me such kindness, what might not you lead him to do if you had the courage to speak to him as is

fitting, seeing that I have spoken thus to him, not only with impunity, but with success even for myself*?" But, in general, even the little ones among the young show us, as it were, in miniature, the features that should distinguish men. Perhaps I cite very puerile things; but with what joy does this John Gerald, a child of eight years, proffer his defence when allowed to walk through grim lonely places with his young governess! Then he would expand all his eyebrows, and try to look valiant, feeling so deeply impressed with Rosalind's conviction when wearing boy's clothes, that it was his duty to comfort the weaker vessel, as doublet and hose ought to show itself courageous to petticoat. His pride in wearing something manly, though it were only that rustic pair of leather gaiters, is suggestive. How does he scorn what may befall himself! He'd have made a proper man. He smiles when hurt, and literally says with the Roman hero, "Scratches with briers, scars to move laughter only." It used to delight him to lead a stranger to some wild country spot, to which no one knew the way but himself; and he used to smile proudly when assured that he was the guide of the party, and that they trusted in him. Such was this fair opening spring of manhood.

> "With triumph glistening in the clear dark eye!
> Too bright to live,—but oh, too fair to die!"

And then, from his eldest brother, how much of the enthusiasm and delicacy of the same spirit could have been learnt! Poor fellow! like the young squire of Chaucer, he loved

> "To speken of aventures, and of batailes,
> That yit was never herd so grete mervailes."

He would murmur tales of iron wars, and would hear "of sallies and retires, of trenches, tents, of pallisadoes, frontiers, parapets, and all the currents of a heady fight." Ardently he wished to serve in the Crimea; this was what he longed for *ἥματα πάντα*. Only obedience and a sense of duty kept him, when refused a commission, from rejecting all revenue but his good spirits, entreating his brother to jump into his land, and enlisting himself

* Mém. tom. iv. 232.

as a private in a cavalry regiment. Young and chivalrous as he was, soldiership had a charm vague and powerful in his eyes; he would have danger for his affianced, and glory for his bride. "You talk of his wanting to be a soldier," said an old general, a friend of his family. "George, I defy you! he's a soldier already, as good as the best of us, do what you like." No one that knew him could doubt what name he would have won among his "plucky" friends more favoured than himself, who were, in fact, the only persons that could teach him what the word envy meant; though it is true he seemed always more anxious to hear others praised than himself. When they departed for the war his depression, however, was affecting. He would address them in the spirit of Euryalus, and say,

> "Mene igitur socium summis adjungere rebus.
> Nise, fugis? solum te in tanta pericula mittam?
> Est hic est animus lucis contemptor, e istum
> Qui vitâ bene credat emi, quo tendis, honorem."

And, in truth, he had in him the spirit of Protesilaus. It was foretold by the Delphic oracle that the first Greek who touched the Trojan shore should die; but that threat could not hold him back. The cause demanded a victim. He leapt first upon the sand, and was slain by Hector. I believe, in my conscience, that this boy would have acted so. What delighted him on all occasions was to risk himself for another. On the broken ice, in a certain solitude, he saved a friend, at the peril of his own life, from drowning. When a fire broke out in the town where he was residing, he was among the foremost to work with some French sailors and others half through a winter's night, heedless of cold and wet, while labouring with gaiety to save the inmates and stop the conflagration. And then at home, in his last years, all this courage, there is reason to believe, was employed in a quiet way, known only to himself, against his passions, as we read of John Hampden, a student of St. Acheul, who, "being naturally lively and impetuous, showed himself just, frank, and courageous against himself." See him in any society,

> "What prudence with the old and wise;
> What grace in youthful gaieties;
> In all how sage

Benignant to the poor and slave,
He showed the base and falsely brave
A lion's rage*."

Never did any one detect upon his brow the trace of fear or even of curious anxiety; he met death like a measure. Only, it is true, a few hours before he breathed his last, for one instant his noble front seemed to indicate, by an expression that I think no painter could have caught, a momentary sense of mystic danger.

Such are the lessons, such the inspirations that the bravest manhood might delight to receive from the child and from the youth not yet, as we might say, weaned from the bower. For some these lessons are for ever ended; their light has set.

"Alas! for us they seem like fleecy clouds,
That struggling through the western sky have won
Their pensive light from a departed sun!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE taste that makes our little guides prefer one spot to another for the purpose of this gathering seems often, I must admit, to be rather capricious. Here is a place for the bower, that, to any one of purely Arcadian propensities, seems, in spite of its London pride, to have but little to recommend it; but I suspect it was chosen, in preference to adjoining groves, for its proximity to that area which, surmounted on one side by the garden, is just deep enough to stun you for ten minutes, though not to kill you, if you fall into it head foremost—Jack can affirm this as an experimental certainty—but down which, and across which, and over which, juveniles like himself can

* Longfellow.

drop, and climb, and sit audaciously, with arms a-kimbo—the exercise of which little acts of graceful defiance makes the whole place to shine in their estimation, however the sight of such wall-flowers may alarm others. But we must keep all this to ourselves now, for here we have to attend to grave matters.

Hitherto the lessons indicated as taught in the Children's Bower have for the most part belonged to the moral order respecting the culture of the heart and the conduct of life. Henceforth we must endeavour to point out how much intellectual benefit can be obtained in the same little unpretending, but very profound and, for all its simplicity, mysterious school. We shall find as we proceed that the latter lessons can hardly be said to yield in importance to the former, and that, if we shall be better men for attending to the first, we shall most certainly become wiser men for giving heed to the second class of instructions yielded by the mere habit of observing and imitating what passes in the mind of children and of youth, without staying the growth of its beard.

We admire Charlemagne when we read in old chronologies under the date of 778, "Carolus Magnus Grammaticam Latinam didicit, Petrum Pisanum Diaconum senem audiens*." We extol Cæsar when he declares to the high priest of Egypt that he has no desire equally powerful with that of finding the sources of the Nile, and that he would quit all the projects of the war for a sight of those fountains which had been so long concealed. But we do not often attend to the fact that in each instance this was only acting and speaking like a boy. The thirst for observation belongs most to early life. Ardour, even for scientific truth, might be learned from it. Look at this sweet thoughtful girl—what philosopher ever watched the stars with more enthusiasm than she looks at them? Since her two brothers died, they all indeed are moved to look upwards thus. The pleasure which many children take in learning, their assiduity and application notwithstanding the need of activity of a different kind which their constitution feels, are only instances

* Lamius, S. Eccles. Florent. Monumenta.

of this docility to the contrivance of nature. Gabriel de Vaufleury wrote from school, saying, "Mamma, I do assure you I am so happy here that my sole regret is to be separated from you."

Will it be pardonable if one suggests that philosophers themselves are obliged to invoke, if not always the method, at least, to the last hours of their career, the spirit of the bower? When the venerable and illustrious Biot warns young aspirants from sacrificing the pure joys of thought to vanity or self-interest, from forfeiting the dignity of their independence, internal happiness, peace of mind, the faculty of labour, genius itself, for some passing and ambiguous glory, the object of a vulgar ambition; when he invites them to approach the study of science with the lively and pure ardour of their age, to prefer the delights of their intelligence to the riches and honours of the world, to be content with a moderate competency, to heed not the warnings of men who think advancement only desirable, to accept the sacrifices which the passion for truth requires, and to resign themselves to be poor and even unknown to the multitude, while unconsciously preparing for themselves a name among those who form the universal senate of intelligences, and a rank which neither the influence of a minister, nor the will of a prince, nor the caprice of a nation, can ever take away from them; when, I say, he addresses them in these terms, what else does he propose but that these candidates who enter the career of science should retain upon that difficult and painful road the heart and the spirit of the Children's Bower?

From children, too, we might learn the importance of habit, and trace the wisdom of that Divine law which orders that an exertion becomes more easy the more frequently it is repeated, without which provision it would be impossible for us to make any advances in improvement, either intellectual or moral *.

The spontaneous, silent observation, again, by children of the facts and phenomena around them, is a trait of early life from which men of mature age might learn much.

But here let us remove an objection that may be proposed in general against all claim of youthful qualification in regard to

* Lord Brougham.

intellect. When we recommend a childlike disposition as being of any mental advantage, it is common to object in limine that the ready confidence of youth is one of the first things to be unlearned if we would advance to any thing like rational judgment. Of course, experience tends of itself to modify that disposition to take on trust which belongs to the young; but we need not be discouraged on finding that the objection rests on a fact that we must admit. On the contrary, we should meet it by showing that, from retaining some portion of this very facility of conviction, the wisest and most practised understandings can sometimes derive a benefit which they may greatly need. Take, for example, the instance of the celebrated Chancellor d'Aguesseau, as sketched by Saint-Simon: "His long practice on the bench," says this keenly-observing duke, "had spoiled his intellect. The office of the bench is to collect, to examine, to weigh, and to compare the reasons of two different parties, and to make out a kind of bill of debtor and creditor before the court with so much art and exactness, that nothing should be forgotten on either side, and that no one of the auditors shall be able to guess what the conclusion will be till he hears it. This continual habit for twenty-four years, added to a mind scrupulous in equity and in forms, full of views, learned in the law, in precedents and customs, had formed him to a state of uncertainty whence he could never emerge. He was the first to suffer from it. To determine any thing was for him a kind of child-labour. He would be one moment of one opinion, and the next of a different one; and his slowness and irresolution agreed in never finishing any thing. So many different things would present themselves to his mind that they stopped him. He would split a hair into four. The least difficulty embarrassed him, and he sought for it with as much pains as another would employ in getting over it. To his best friends he would then show himself as the old Duchesse d'Estrées-Vaubrun said, 'un ami travesti en ennemi*.'" Now, would he not have proved both a wiser man and a more efficient chancellor if he had modified these defects by adopting somewhat of the facility and confidence of youth, arising from

* Mém. t. xiv. 1182.

its intuitive sense, and its comparative exemption from an overload of either scrupulosity or learning? But let us proceed to the point I set out with intending to establish, namely, the observant spirit of children, and its legitimate application manifested by the young.

The way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent on the rocks, the way of a ship upon the sea—these things, said Solomon, were difficult to know; but there was a fourth thing undiscoverable, the way of a man in his youth. The fretfulness and the folly of the old prompt frequent complaints on this head, and dictate often restraints as vain as they are cruel. What the boy cannot help in his nature they account a vice in him. The folly is on their side, with all their gravity. What has he been doing all the while? picking up instruction on the saunter, silently treasuring up little observations of his own, complying with the Divine intention, laying up for himself a store of facts, of inductions, the rudiments of future ability and wisdom, justifying, in fact, his right to the Greek name of man, ἄνθρωπος, as Plato derives it, by contemplating what he sees *.

"The curiosity of children," says a philosopher, "might lead us to reflect on the wisdom of the Creator in providing helps for the exertion of attention, which is the most important of all the mental faculties. Among these contrivances of nature, without which the effort of fixing the mind upon a subject would be painful, if not impossible, curiosity, or the thirst of knowledge, is one of the chief. This desire renders any new idea the source of attraction, and makes the mind of a child almost involuntarily, and with gratification rather than pain, bend and apply itself to whatever has the quality of novelty to rouse it. Children, too, in a remarkable manner, are assisted by the pleasure which an association of ideas confers, as also by habit, all of which conduce to their practice of attentive observation of the things which surround them. The curiosity implanted in children is proportioned to the novelty of objects, and, consequently, to their ignorance; and its immediate effects are to fix their attention, to stimulate their apprehensive powers; by

* Cratylus.

deepening the impressions of all ideas on their minds, to give the memory a hold over them; to make all intellectual exertion easy, and convert into a pleasure the toil that would otherwise be a pain. Can any thing be more perfectly contrived as an instrument of instruction, and an instrument precisely adapted to the want of knowledge, by being more powerful in proportion to the ignorance in which we are? Hence it is the great means by which, in childhood above all, we are taught every thing most necessary for our physical as well as moral existence. In the beginning of life it prevails so powerfully as to make us learn the faculties of our own bodies, and the general properties of those around us—an amount of knowledge which, for its extent and its practical usefulness, very far exceeds, though the most ignorant possess it, whatever additions the greatest philosophers are enabled to build upon it in the longest course of the most successful investigations."

This first lesson, then, you perceive, teaches us to admire the simple, unconscious docility of youth in responding to the intentions of Divine wisdom, which implanted in its mind these tendencies to facilitate its attainment of necessary knowledge. Though it little suits our general purpose to notice what belongs to the study of philosophy, we cannot avoid being struck at the outset with the fact that youth, by this habit of observation, can teach even the method of philosophizing to its elders.

The inductive principle is this,—that from observing a number of particular facts, we reason to others of the same kind; that from observing a certain thing to happen in certain circumstances, we expect the same thing to happen in the like circumstances. Now, this is exactly what children do. Without pretending to be wise, or to have read a line of Bacon, they are thus proficients in the inductive method; they build no theories, like grown-up people, not excepting some philosophers, and make facts bend to them; they observe what is around them, and then draw conclusions, which are often precisely those of the greatest intelligences after laborious investigation.

> "Children are blest and powerful; their world lies
> More justly balanced; partly at their feet,
> And part far from them."

The young are not blinded by their science, like those figure-painters that Ruskin speaks of, who to all intents and purposes were reduced to this state by their knowledge of anatomy. They see things as we were intended to see them, in a simple, untheorizing manner, and they see them thoroughly. The main thing with them is not to say, but to see, "to get to the root of a matter." A boy cannot descend or mount a staircase without hanging over the banisters, as if he were examining a proposition of geometry; he cannot see a tree or rock without having an eye to the best way of climbing it. What an intimate popular knowledge has he of every common trivial thing! What can he not do with a stick and a knife, with some twine, or a broken toy! Every thing is food for his ingenuity and for his experimental ardour. Then, as regards observation of the living, and a kind of social knowledge, the young can teach us much. They know what may be useful to know about every person and every locality near them; they can tell you whom to apply to and where to go on every emergency. To be sure, they have no notion about dignified reserve in this respect. They are not like Thucydides, speaking of the fleet commanded by Sophocles, without adding that this admiral was celebrated for his tragedies. They will enter into details even that you may not want to hear about. They know the name and habits of each neighbour's dog; they know by the voice, without seeing him, whose boy it is that is shouting out, "Fan, Fan," the other side of the wall; and they can tell you what the lad at that moment is wanting the dog to do. Think what a practised ear and eye they must have to know the distinctive sound of so many juvenile's voices, and the peculiar tastes of each, as well as the capabilities of his canine companion! John, this child of eight years, knows every boy's face in the town, and the colour and make of his dress both for week-days and Sundays. He knows from what shop every barrow and every lad comes. He knows who is the owner of each horse he sees, and how long he has had him. He knows how many brothers and sisters has every errand-boy he meets in the street; he can tell you some kind, generous traits of many a poor person's character.

"The common things that round him lie
Some random blessings will impart;"

and that you might do well to learn from him this habit of observing little things is indicated by another poet, saying,

"Oh, reader! had you in your mind
Such stores as silent thought can bring,
Oh, gentle reader! you would find
A tale in every thing."

"To be able," some one says, as if he had been observing little John or his tall brother, "to gather on the highway of life, or in the retired lanes of lowly poverty, simple incidents, beautiful evidences of humanity, this has been often thought the test of the great soul." Many an old monk or hermit, pacing to and fro through his forest glades and rocky solitudes, would be thought a dunce in a respectable school; but many such a monk so regarded as a dunce would, from his life of solitude and introspection, have accumulated a mass of facts in moral history, the spiritual life of which would enlighten an university of sages, and it is the observing of these moral facts which forms the artist. If it be objected that the observations of youth are apt to be influenced by their puerile tastes and passions, it might be sufficient answer to cite the words of a great and accurate observer of nature, and give them a wider application than he intended, when he says that more depends in drawing on a thing being done for love of it, than on the wise purposes or wise principles for which and on which it is done; "love's misrepresentation being, in his judgment, truer than the most mathematical presentation *."

That manhood in maturity, notwithstanding all its vast intellectual development, can receive benefit from attending to what takes place in regard to general observation and deductions from it in the Children's Bower, will be obvious to all who are attentive observers of its habits, at least in these days, when, it is admitted, there are more remarkers than observers; whereas, in old times, as still in the bower, we find more observers than

* Ruskin.

remarkers. Do you think that men need no hint from youth as to the practical skill to be derived from personal observation? Read Ruskin on landscape painters. Do you think that mature men are always more judicious than the young in selecting facts for investigation? Read modern travels in France and Italy. Do you suppose that, like the young, careful observers of facts, such adults really at all times adopt the inductive principle where they ought to do so, and that they philosophize practically according to it? Take to reading certain books of Anglican theology. If it were all thus as you think, the bower, perhaps, in this respect, could teach nothing, and they might pass on without consulting it; but, with all due respect to their gravity, the exact contrary to each of these hypotheses is more generally true; and a man who does not see it to be so must possess a singular obtuseness of vision. Look at the learned and highly educated. How many of them, to put aside altogether the interests of art, might derive from observing children's ways a knowledge of things which, at least in Homeric times, would have been thought essential to every man that wanted to be a man at all? Many have heard the ludicrous instance related of Wordsworth and Coleridge, when both were in vain trying to get the collar off the horse, which they almost strangled in the attempt; and when at last Coleridge gave the job up, saying that the horse's head must have grown from gout or dropsy since it was put on, for that "it was a downright impossibility for such a huge os frontis to pass through so narrow a collar;" when, at this instant, the servant girl coming in, said, "La, master, you don't go about it in the right way; you should do like this," when turning it upside down, she slipped it off in a moment to their great wonderment. The artless way, too, in which the young impart the results of their observations might be usefully studied by some pedants. I remember an amusing instance, when some kind boys, wading in the sea up to their middles, came to my boat at the entrance of Pegwell Cove, and said, "If you want to leave this tide, the sooner you're off the better. Don't land; the rocks are fast appearing; you'd better be off immediately." Though very thirsty, and the glass of beer was in sight, I was off accordingly; for they knew more about the place than I did.

The young are fond of picking up knowledge from hearing what men of different professions have to say respecting their own business. Our Thomas, who in his last years disliked study in the cabinet, had a passion for this mode of instruction; and from conversing with generals and foreigners of long experience who had held a public station, with persons of every rank knowing the world, with sailors, and farmers, and humble artisans, it is wonderful what a mass of information he was daily accumulating.

Children and the young generally seem to know by instinct that their peculiar work is "to see and to feel;" and if their elders were to take a hint from them, though they might read fewer books, the results in regard to mind would be not less excellent than they might prove with respect to art, as a great author shows, in the event of their taking that road, and adopting on that point childlike habits. "The greatest thing," he says elsewhere, "a human soul ever does in this world is to see something, and tell what it saw in a plain way. To see clearly is poetry and religion."

Then, for the selection of facts are manhood and age, think you, always so much much more judicious than our beardless philosophers, that they have nothing to learn from them? Not to refer to our travellers, who watch the going round of dishes, observe the site selected by hucksters, and record scandals of which the source is often in their own imagination, Picus of Mirandula cites many instances even from the works of Aristotle, of observations which any common lad could know were erroneous. With all his penetration and labour, the Stagyrite, like Pliny and many other philosophers, cites things as natural facts that are, and that boys know to be false*. What think you of the grave Tacitus, the farthest removed assuredly from a youthful type, saying, this year, when so and so were consuls, after a long interval of ages the bird phœnix came into Egypt; and then after telling some things as fabulous, adding, "but that the bird is sometimes seen in Egypt there is no doubt whatever†?" But you will say we live in more enlightened times. Well, still if weighed in the balance

* Exam. Van. Doct. Gent. lib. vi. † Ann. vi.

of religion, or piety, or wisdom, the facts, or the supposed facts, that men of mature age often observe will not be found more important than those that strike the attention of the young. Philosophers themselves, as we have just seen, are sometimes detected by their own brethren in failing in regard to this choice. In the Sylva Sylvarum of Lord Bacon, there is, says Lord Brougham, a vast deal of miscellaneous matter on all physical subjects, and not one allusion to final causes. But it must also be admitted, that it is a work of no value. Among the one thousand observations of which it consists, hardly one can be found in which there is not some instance of credulity, superstition, groundless hypothesis, manifest error of some kind or other; for a proneness to fanciful theory forms a distinguishing feature of the book. Assuredly, it is a proof that the doctrine of final causes is not the only parent of a "phantastic philosophy *."

But take the mature and most intelligent even of the present day on their own especial ground. Take our excellent observers, excellent critics, admirable judges, do they really on all subjects that require it carry out the principle of induction? Some who observe what passes around us will conclude that they are rather qualified for admission into the school of Pythagoras, who wrote over its door "Worship echo." It is in them more than in the young that the malleability of human nature is seen. "Childhood," says a philologist, "is flexible, adolescence ductile, youth pliable, but maturity is malleable; that is, it is the grown up whose opinions and conduct most depend on the multiplicity of strokes with the hammer of assertion which the tongues of men or the types of newspapers can contrive to apply." Children observe with their own eyes, and infer irrespective of the subject and its consequences. Have childhood and youth, then, no lesson of philosophy to give men? no example of consistency to shame them? I think it is not so; the smooth chins are the philosophers for my money; and here is one reason for my preference. It is evident that many very intelligent men have seen more than they have perceived, as Sir Thomas Overbury would say. For instance, it is a fact that the ancient

* Lord Brougham, Natural Theology.

Christian Church which received Constantine, and which beheld the fall of the Roman empire, is spread over the world still, and they don't observe it. They have a theory about Romanism suppressing nationality; about its non-identity in different places; about exoteric and esoteric teaching; all fancies and suppositions of their own. It is a fact, that within this society the doctrines and rites of the early Christians are transmitted, and they don't observe it. They have a theory about something else—they cannot tell you exactly what—being the older of the two. It is a fact, that there are Abbot Samsons in the nineteenth as well as in the twelfth century, that among living priests are found some of the best, the manliest, the most working, wisest men that can be found in the world,—that heaven can have no mortal officers more like itself than them, and they don't observe it. They have a theory about effete modern 'isms,' about craft, and they believe all the living to be infected by it. It is a fact, that partly by means of the sacrament of penance, men in great multitudes either retain or recover virtue, and they don't observe it. They have a theory of their own about auricular confession; and of the thing itself they won't hear for an instant. It is a fact, that this old Christianity is favourable to the interests of the poor, even in their own way of looking at them, and they don't observe it. They have a theory about the superstition and injurious practice of alms. It is a fact, that it forms in every walk of life holy and great men, even according to their own standard of heroes, and they don't observe it. They have a theory like that of Tacitus, when he wrote about a certain "noxious superstition," about its debasing the intellect and enslaving the soul. So they visit foreign countries; they see what takes place at home; they study antiquity; they read statistical tables; they see the office at St. George's; they see a Migeon, a Haffringue, or a Doyle; they see sons and daughters going to confession, and they see how they act before and after it; they see "the little sisters of the poor" going about in their cart, and a thousand things of the same kind, that one cannot stop to enumerate; they see the great and holy prelates, the devoted laborious missionaries, the calm and just statesman, the incorruptible magistrate, and the admirable men and women of the

present day, sprung from that ancient stock of faith, devoted to that faith, working and dying for that faith;—they see millions of facts of the same order,—millions of facts that present a contrast that is trumpet-tongued,—and they don't observe the facts, and they reason not from them; they draw no inductions, no logical conclusions from them; they stick to the point of their hypothesis; they are mere fanciful builders of theories, and intent and resolved on making all facts bend to them; they do not even come up to Beatrice's notion of a good eye; they can't see a church by daylight; they verify what an old author says, "that when once a man has conceived an hypothesis, it assimilates every thing to itself as proper nourishment; and from the first moment generally grows the stronger by every thing they see, read, or understand." "Your curious observers," says Sterne, "are seldom worth a groat." And have such men nothing to learn from the young? Give me the beardless. Read o'er this, and after this of the studied composition of their elders, and then to the logic of the bower with what appetite you have.

Among the observations of childhood and youth there is again another class to which we may especially attend, as furnishing a particular lesson from which their elders might derive great benefit,—I allude to the singular tact or facility with which they can distinguish characters, which art could no doubt be acquired by others, if they studied its source and watched its exercise. It certainly is remarkable, for instance, to find that this attribute belongs to nations that, in regard to faith, retain the old religious impressions, more than to others. A recent English traveller to Naples and Brindisi, after describing the population as under the influence of "the grossest and most puerile superstition," proceeds as follows: "It is worth noting that there was a decided feeling in favour of the English. We had opportunities of observing the confidence placed in the English character. We found that the mass of the inhabitants were admirers of the solid qualities of the English character *." Not to remark the inconsistency of supposing persons grossly superstitious, feeling admiration for qualities that are in direct

* Athenæum.

antagonism with their own, is it not noticeable to find that the virtues of Englishmen are no where so much admired as in such countries? (for that this is the case will be admitted by most travellers,) especially when we find that these same virtues, unless they meet in a politician, a party man, or a man who can give other things, will hardly be sufficient to get him a salute in return for his own in London itself. This accurate discrimination of character is an attribute of early life, which men are not always prepared to hear ascribed to it; thinking often, as they do, with our great poet, that

> "Therefore love is said to be a child,
> Because in choice he is so oft beguiled."

But those who have attained to great spirituality in their life and manners seem to have been always aware of the fact; and, indeed, such persons might often verify its existence by a reference to their own reception; for persons of true worth in any respect are always dear to the young. Mason, the English minister at the imperial court, says of Cardinal Pole, "Whosoever within the realm liketh him worst, I would he might have with him the talk of one half-hour. It were a right stony heart that in a small time he could not soften." When any "little dears," when children and boys meet with such a character, they do not need the talk of one half-hour; there is a certain affinity or instinct which almost binds them to him at first sight. It was from having observed a trait somewhat analogous that Socrates, when accused of corrupting youth by teaching, stated what would be sure to happen if he were sent into exile. "I well know that wherever I may go," he said to his judges, "the youth will listen to me when I speak, as they do here." They have a dog's instinct, too, to discover the good-natured and affectionate, even though faulty enough in other respects. "The children and I," says Pepys, "dined by ourselves; all the children and I were very merry, and they mightily fond of me."

The young in general, like the common people, have a wonderful insight into the qualities of the human heart; they know well what distinguishes one class and one order of persons from another. I remember hearing a young girl once

say, on meeting five children in black, "Poor things, they've lost a parent, I think it must have been father." "Pray, how do you know that?" some one asked. "Because they are dressed so neatly," she replied; "a stranger and nurse would not have shown such attention." I remember seeing two young persons purchasing some nuts in the street, and hearing one of them cry, "Ho! I thought they were for my pocket," when he saw them poured into that of his companion; when the seller, archly smiling, said, "Oh! I'm sure it's all one for that matter!" "The boy was hurt," some one says; and a common person will reply, "I suppose he was getting a-fighting." They know what we are all up to in an ordinary way. I heard a young person say, "You know I'm fond of chattering with any one I meet, but when I fall in with a person like that who talks so small to me, and uses so many endearing epithets, I see it's all a thing put on, and I can hardly bring myself to answer them yes or no." The young can detect at first sight such a character as that of the Père Tellier, and with as much repugnance as old Fagon testified, when, stooping and leaning on his stick, he caught a sight of that successor of the worthy Père de la Chaise for the first time in the king's cabinet, and heard him disclaim all relationship with the great, and boast of his being a poor peasant of Normandy. "Quel sacré!" exclaimed the clear-sighted physician, shrugging up his shoulders, and again stooping over his crutch *. If maturity and age, grown infirm and devout, would sometimes see persons with the eyes of children and young people, like those of this wise doctor, they would be preserved from being the dupes of sly designing hypocrites; and their kindness and charity flowing in natural channels would light upon the proper objects for receiving both. Moreover, they would gain much by picking up from them a little of that keen sense of humour, which receives such intense delight from "The Journey of Brown, Jones, and Robinson." Our Thomas, as also his little brother, possessed that good-natured perception of the ludicrous which is never unconnected with the spirit of love and charity that belongs to youth, as, indeed, might be gathered from the

* vii. 54.

impression of young people produced by this very book, of which the personages become dear to them, as if they had known them personally. Children and the young are great physiognomists; they can see amiable nature or evil nature in the countenance, without waiting for a word, while mature age will often pass by both unnoticed. Our little John had a sort of passion for the type of the English face in youth, and wherever he could approach it he was a bosom friend. To elder people what is that beauty of race? A monied look, a respectable look, a fashionable look, perhaps, weighs more with them. They might do well to borrow children's eyes, and admire rather that "expression blending good nature, valour, and refinement; that uncorrupt youth in the face of manhood, which is daily seen in the streets of London *."

One that knew well our John, remembers his own first voyage to the Continent when a boy, and the indescribable pleasure he experienced, notwithstanding the raptures of his journey, on his return, when he first saw the smooth English faces of the sailors, every one of whom he thought he could have kissed.

From observing the instinct of early life in this appreciation of characters, men might even learn, with St. Augustin, to distinguish between the impious and sinners, remarking with him, that "all the impious are sinners, but not all sinners are impious †." Youth can feel the difference which its elders would do well to distinguish. From the same observation they might learn also to exercise that power of discrimination between offences, which is often represented as the prerogative of chivalrous honour. There is not a boy that would not echo that noble speech of Piccolomini:

> "Whate'er is human, to the human being
> Do I allow; and to the vehement
> And striving spirit readily I pardon
> Th' excess of action;
> But not—not to the traitor—yes! The word
> Is spoken out—

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* Emerson. † In Ps. i.

Not to the traitor can I yield a pardon;
That is no mere excess; that is no error
Of human nature—that is wholly diff'rent;
O! that is black, black as the pit of hell!"

From children, and youth too, you might learn the resolution which the Psalmist ascribes to himself, saying, "I used not to eat with him who had a proud eye, and an insatiable heart*." No; truly little John for one won't eat with him. He'd rather not; oh, please don't ask him; too bad to tease him like that; he'll fly from the dining-room, from the well-informed man, the remarkable man, and he'll eat, full of happiness and mirth, in a corner of the garden, with some poor working boy, or with the son of some honest neighbour in his shirt sleeves, where their table is a wheelbarrow and their food a crust.

To be sure, in the world, far from the Children's Bower, men's judgments respecting the character of others are formed often on very different kinds of ground; and there seems to be no limit to the range of properties for which some will be admired. I remember the master of an hotel assuring me, that certain friends of mine who had just left him were the "nicest people" that ever came to it, adding, with remarkable gravity, in the same breath, that they had required five dinners to be served each day. From the spirit of the bower men might learn the wisdom and the charm of cultivating an aptitude to admire what is good and beautiful in others, the quick eye that can detect it, and the honest heart that will feel no envy awakened by its recognition. The young seem already instinctively impressed with the feeling recommended by an eminent author, that "it is a far better thing to find out other great men, than to become one yourself; since you can but become one at best, but you may bring others to light in numbers†." On the other hand, from the same spirit men might learn to detect all the various forms of imposition that spring from latent pride and selfishness. Suppose yourself like Cicero, enjoying the vacation of old age, sitting in a reception-room, where every one that pleases to visit you can enter. Depend upon it, with all your experience and all your discernment, there will be no harm in having some child

* Ps. c.

† Ruskin.

at your elbow, whose instinct may assist you while you are discharging what the philosopher calls this gracious and honourable office of declining years*. Watch the boy's countenance. If he be a child like John, it will tell you without his opening his mouth of one of them, "There can be no kernel in this light nut; the soul of this man is his clothes." Mark him again while he looks at that other. You know that he is saying to himself something to this effect, "I did think thee to be a pretty wise fellow; thou didst make tolerable vent of thy travel. It might pass; yet the scarfs and the bannerets about thee did manifoldly dissuade me from believing thee a vessel of too great burden. So, my good window of lattice, fare thee well; thy casement I need not open, for I look through thee." Watch his lips as he looks archly after those others who are leaving, and you can fancy him the boy in Henry V., who says, "As young as I am, I have observed these three swashers. I am boy to them all three; but all they three, though they would serve me, could not be man to me."

In the Children's Bower men can learn also, however astonished they may be to hear it, the intellectual virtue of discretion. Grown-up people may be as incredulous on this point as when they read of that Tages in the books of the Etruscans, who was seen springing out of the ground of a ploughed field, in a puerile form, and endowed with senile prudence, so as to excite the admiration of all beholders; but some can tell them from experience, that it would be better to have for teacher on many subjects such a ploughed-up boy than one of the best informed and the best known.

There is, of course, a kind of discretion which youth is unqualified to teach. I mean that forethought and self-possession which Saint-Simon ascribes to a celebrated society, a member of which, he says, ever careful of what may happen, and of what every one may turn out,—when he speaks to you, "has all times present." There is also, no doubt, often wanting in it the caution which escapes from being taken in. Our Thomas is an instance in that respect apt enough to be remembered; though to acquit himself well on every occasion he had, like most of his

* De Legibus i.

age, and in particular like La Fleur, all the dispositions in the world. It is enough for heaven, as Sterne says, and ought to be enough for you. However, we admit the imperfection; but there is another side to the medal; for youth's sense of duty is identical with discretion of the right sort. Men will often lose that sense, and then I should like to know what their discretion amounts to? Men are then like great babies, minus all discretion; they must be coaxed, flattered, humoured, otherwise they grow sulky; they won't work; they won't eat; they won't see how their own interest is compromised by any thing they resolve on doing; how the happiness of others is disturbed. Perhaps they grow furious, and slay their best friend, the wife of their bosom, as they would an ox at the manger,—

ὥς τίς τε κατέκτανε βοῦν ἐπὶ φάτνῃ.

Men, without inspiration from the Children's Bower, will often grow jealous, suspicious, self-tormentors, and tormentors of all around them. They have to be sorry for it; though, even while lamenting, they can't see how much they might have learnt from the young; so they cry with Polonius,

"——— Beshrew my jealousy!
It seems, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion."

Men are aware of the force of temptation, and they run to expose themselves to it. Children know it not; but discretion, acting through obedience, keeps them at a distance from it. They hear it said,

"——— Strange that flowers of earth
Are visited by every air that stirs,
And drink in sweetness only, while the child,
That shuts within its breast a bloom for heaven,
May take a blemish from the breath of love,
And bear the blight for ever *."

This is enough for them. They ask no more questions, and

* Willis.

submit to the required discipline, content to know, with Overbury,

"He comes too neere, that comes to be denide."

Oh, how often was it said secretly of the youngest of the two we mourn for,

"I fear thy gentle loveliness,
Thy witching tone and air,
Thine eye's beseeching earnestness
May be to thee a snare *!"

Oh, how often was it said audibly to his eldest brother,

"O thou child of many prayers!
Life hath quicksands! life hath snares!
Care and age come unawares!"

Well, what was the result in the latter instance? For in the former, unless death may be regarded as supplying the answer, which I am far from thinking, there was not time to learn it. It was an obedience to what was imposed. It was an occasion for discretion which, amidst the buoyancy and impetuosity of youth, might have shamed manhood and old age. It was a verifying of the poet's lines—

"Youth's fortunate feeling doth seize easily
The absolute right †."

Even in the lower and more ordinary sense of the term the discretion of childhood might be proposed to men for imitation. The wise way in which little John used sometimes to correct or admonish the elder brother nearest in age to himself would strike every one. Many a time it might have recalled the scene where little York begs his uncle's dagger, and his brother, the prince, exclaims, "A beggar, brother?" and when, on the other continuing with pert replies, he says,

"My lord of York will still be cross in talk;
Uncle, your grace knows how to bear with him."

Once in the court-yard, where he loved to dabble about, bobbing around, he heard two of the men disputing as to whose

* Longfellow. † Wallenstein.

business it was to announce a poor beggar who was standing at the back door. John heard them in silence for a while, only looking at them stedfastly, as if puzzled at the phenomenon. At last he said, smiling, "Come, I'll go and do it, though while you two are there, perhaps it's not my business." Like other children, too, he would correct and admonish people in fault by his countenance, and that without a frown, but with a look that spoke to the heart more than the best orator,—"per tristitiam vultus corrigitur animus delinquentis." If he heard of a fault, he looked sad and anxious, that was all, and that was enough.

Gabriel de Vaufleury was so remarkable for discretion, we are told, that no one ever had any secrets to conceal from him. People used to tell him every thing. "I should never have thought," he said to one of his aunts, "that so much confidence would be placed in a boy like me*." "I know more secrets than you do," John used to say to his little sister; "I hear them when I am being dressed, when Nomm and Anne are talking." The fact was that there was no occasion to conceal any thing from him. Never would he repeat any thing that could in the smallest way cause pain to another or a breach of charity. His discretion certainly was great. When told not to mention any thing, after a conversation in his presence, he used to shake or nod his head in silent token of resolution, or say, "All right;" and he never betrayed the secret. It was not he that would by indiscreet talking ever bring you into trouble, or into collision with others. Had grown-up people, then, nothing to learn from this child of eight years, think you? The Père Lebrun speaks of a boy, Ubaldinus, who, if ever he perceived any of his associates displeased or angry with some one, would go round about in a prudent mild way, and bring him to forgive all that had offended him†. Such discretion saints would imitate.

But now we ought to take rest a little; for a lesson of graver importance must be attended to at our next sitting. The faint gray tint I lately spoke of as long preceding night is slowly coming on.

* Souvenirs de St. Acheul. † Instit. Juventutis Christianæ.

CHAPTER XVII.

E have not this time to proceed far to find the bower. It is placed between some high laurels and laurestinas which front the house close to the door; but why it is placed there is not so obvious. The reason, however, is simply that there is before it a patch of ground which may be dug and turned up as often as the children like; and so every morning, as true as the clock, will our little Jack be found there spade in hand, and, as Gray would say, envying him, "dirty and amused," very intent on what he is about, but not less free to entertain you with any talk that you may please to have with him, though it were only to complain, like the same poet, that you can be never "either dirty or amused as long as you live."

Well, then, the toil of this little labourer before us can suggest the subject of our next discussion.

It is a great lesson, no where, perhaps, delivered with such practical efficacy as in the Children's Bower, which teaches us to renounce, not in a way of commonplace parlance, which is all nothing or worse than nothing, but really and actually, pride, and to cultivate the quality that is opposed to it,—a rare principle, and with much labour learned in wisdom's school. Of this instruction no one can exaggerate the importance wherever it is obtained; and we shall see proof in the sequel that it can be had here.

"I shall be pure and exempt from the great crime*," said David. "What is this great crime? I will say," adds St. Augustin, "what I think. This great crime, in my opinion, is pride,—pride which caused the fall of the angel, and made him a demon, and caused him to lose heaven for ever. This is the great crime, which is the cause of all other sins. This it is which prevents the great of the world from tasting the Christian humility, and from embracing the yoke of Christ. They

* Ps. xviii.

want to be independent, to have no master; but in refusing to submit to God, they only reject a good master. Serve they must, and so they undergo the heavy yoke of sin; for he who refuses to be the slave of charity, becomes the slave of iniquity *."

St. Gregory says, that the most evident sign of reprobation is pride, and of election, humility,—"evidentissimum reproborum signum superbia est, at contra humilitas, electorum." Man, say the ancients, is called, from the ground,—"homo ab humo;" by which name it is wisely provided that he should have an occasion of humbling himself, and of avoiding vainglory.

"Res homo vana; placet? Sordebit. Abundat? Egebit.
Floret? Marcebit. Stat? Cadit. Est? Nec erit †."

The child finds a lesson of humility at every turn appropriate to his capacity. Every thing is mysterious to him. "A rapid multitude of questions," says a great theologian, "rush upon the mind; yet he is silent, as if he needed not an answer to any of them. They are beyond answering; and he feels that the sight itself satisfies him better than any answer. To him the questions are not difficulties. Either they answer themselves, or they do not need an answer ‡." This is true of the young even in regard to the natural world. Look at the children seated, as they often are perhaps, close to a bed of nettles. The sting of that plant is so constructed as to fill scientific observers with wonder. The child or youth only knows what it can do to him; but what use it is of he knows no more than his heels. He never asks what end it answers in creation. He no more tries to explain it than he would seek a scientific apology for the waters of the Deluge. The young have an instinct of humility, which teaches them, without the labour of finding it out by study, that we live amongst riddles and mysteries; that the most obvious things which come in our way have dark sides, which the quickest sight cannot penetrate into; and from this general appreciation of almost every cranny of nature's works, they are prepared to find themselves puzzled, and at a loss in

* In Ps. xviii. † S. Melit. Clavis. de Homine.
‡ Faber.

that higher sphere, where their faith is to be exercised. It was a flying from the atmosphere of the Children's Bower that prepared the way for the intellectual revolution in the sixteenth century. Picus of Mirandula, in that work of singular erudition in which, in accordance with the providential economy that watches over the exigencies of each period, he exposed the fundamental errors of all the schools of Gentile philosophy, seems inclined to designate all those who were disposed to return to them simply as the proud; and he shows himself, even while attacking them, willing to grant indulgence to the sceptics so far as they were marshalled against the presumption of the dogmatists of every school*. The young have no "views;" no Shandean hypothesis troubles them. They have no antipathies like the Duchesse de Nemours, who, one day conversing with Louis XIV. at a window of his cabinet, perceiving Matignon, who passed in the court below, began to spit five or six times running, and then asked pardon of the king, saying, "that she could never see a Matignon without spitting like that†." The Duc de Saint-Simon ascribes to the Père de la Chaise this kind of intellectual freedom. He used to have always on his table the work of the Père Quesnel, which had caused such an uproar; and when people used to say they wondered to find with him the publication of such an author, he would reply, "that he liked good wherever he found it‡." The young, by a kind of instinct, even before confutation, are mild towards others, and liberated from strong and harsh opinions,—a liberation of all others, as Plato says, "the most pleasant to hear of;" and it is from its rendering men like children, in this respect, that the philosopher calls confutation "the greatest and chief of purifications." "We must think," he says, "that he who is not thus confuted, even though he should be the great king himself, would be unpurified to the utmost degree, and uninstructed and ugly with respect to those things in which he ought to be most pure and beautiful. It is not," he adds, "the Sophists who employ this art of right confutation respecting a vain opinion of

* Exam. Vanitatis Doctrinæ Gentium et Veritatis Christianæ Disciplinæ.

† St.-Sim. vi. 61. ‡ Ib. vii. 47.

wisdom, though it is nothing else than the sophistic art of a noble race *." Interrogate the Christian schools, and they will say to you with one voice,

"In pride, in reas'ning pride, our error lies."

"In truth," says St. Bernard, "I have found nothing so conducive to finding, preserving, and recovering the grace of God, as to discover how to think with humility,—'non altum sapere.'" Those austere, haughty, and disdainful old men like Proclus, who seduced Tertullian to become a Montanist,—men so unlike others, endowed with so many virtues, accustomed to fasting and mortification, and enemies of all pleasure,—were often fearful examples of this truth, leaving a shameful memory to all future ages in the depth and influence of their fall. Even when no such consequences are visible, it is just possible that the grave and learned might sometimes derive a little benefit by condescending to take a lesson or two from the bower. "Whence does it arise," asks some one over bold in a work of Gerson's, "that some theologians are not better when they are not even worse than other men?" "I do not wish," replies the wise chancellor, "to be a spy or a censor over the life of theologians or of any other class of men; but this one thing I have believed, and therefore will say, that theology, when it is not associated with faith, hope, and charity, puffeth up and does as much harm as philosophy, according to the report of the Apostle; whereas I believe that common unlearned people, like young persons, in whom are simple faith, certain hope, and sweet charity, will imbibe with more fruit those very theological sentences of which I have been showing the importance, than your learned men who are proudly inflated by their science; for, judge by experience of a common accident, how can the eye see when it is inflamed and swelled †?" Besides, recollect with what facility the humility of the young enables them to acknowledge their errors when they have been mistaken, which may often all through life prove a disposition of such vital importance. Have bearded men nothing to learn from them in

* Sophist.

† De Consolatione Theologiæ, P. IV. lib. iv.

that respect? "I have lived twelve years," says a senator, "in political assemblies, and assisted at many vicissitudes. Rarely have I heard the noble admission of a fault. Parties pass their time in demonstrating the beauty of their errors, and when they accuse themselves it is only to take some vantage-ground against an adversary."

Men, therefore, advanced in years, and of mature intelligence, at all times need the lesson of the Children's Bower in regard to practical humility; they need it whether they look to the interests of the future, or even to those of the present life; and it is not because one finds in the sweepings of a portfolio a certain number of passages on a trite subject, and because I want to lengthen my book by stringing them together, that I propose to hear what can be said of pride and of humility; it is because we cannot avoid, while considering the advantages to be derived from familiarity with the young, being struck with the great fact that in this respect manhood and age have a lesson to learn from them of an immeasurable importance. "And though so be," to use Chaucer's words, "that no man can telle utterly the nombre of the twigges, and of the harm that cometh of pride, yet wol I schew a party of them, as ye schal understonde." If we set down nothing else as the result of our observations, the study of this one lesson, which is never withheld in the bower, would impart value to a book, and render it, as Johnson says, "not unprofitable to the great republic of humanity in times when it will not be inquired whether its author was 'albus an ater;' when all his faults and all his follies shall be lost in forgetfulness among things of no concern or importance to the world."

Men need this lesson, we are all conscious, if they regard their future and eternal interest; for "heaven's gates are not so highly arched as princes' palaces; they that enter there must go upon their knees." How many, in the present state of civilization, act like the admirers and dependants of the Pharisees! Common humble people said of Christ, "Never man spake like this man." To whom the proud or interested answered, "Have any of the Pharisees or Scribes believed in Him? Is it not only this common people, ignorant of the law, who have done so?" Such is the mode of reasoning still with many grown-up people.

We are told, in a word, that for the proud there is no conversion, no faith, no grace, no sacramental assistance, no hope of what all these are intended to secure.

But men need this lesson also in regard to the present life; and this we can be sure of from judging of what we see with our own eyes, and therefore an old poet says,

> "——— in this one thing all the discipline
> Of manners and of manhood is contain'd;
> A man to join himself with the universe
> In his main sway, and make (in all things fit)
> One with that all; and go on round as it;
> Not plucking from the whole his wretched part,
> And into straits or into naught revert;
> Wishing the complete universe might be
> Subject to such a rag of it as he."

"I have been more and more convinced, the more I think of it," says a great observer of nature and of life, "that in general pride is at the bottom of all great mistakes. All the other passions do occasional good, but whenever pride puts in its word every thing goes wrong; and what it might really be desirable to do quietly and innocently, it is mortally dangerous to do proudly *."

Men are liable to give way to sheer ignoble pride, in all social relations, in a manner which no conventionalism can excuse. We need no child to tell us that. Here, then, is the second show of the cursed family. In the world no grown-up people seem to believe in the possibility of escaping from this kind of contagion; so all make up their minds to catch it in one form or other, verifying often the remark of Tacitus, "juxta adulatio et superbia †." Hence complains an eloquent theologian of the influence of worldliness upon pious people. "Their devotions," he says, "contrast strangely with their anxiety to get into society, with their hankering after great people, with their excitement about marriages, with the perpetual running of their conversation on connexions, wealth, influence, and the like, and their unconscious but almost gross respect for those who are very much richer than themselves." One might think

* Ruskin. † Ann. iv.

he was quite fresh from the bower to hear him talk like that. Pepys, too, speaks of pride, like a boy of the same form, in these terms, describing royalty in the tennis-court: "To see how the king's play was extolled, without any cause at all, was a loathsome sight,—such open flattery is beastly." Only the bower, with some of its strong loves, can tone such people down, and bring them from a type of insolence and servility to a Kate or Harry, conformable as other Kates or Harrys. But how effectually does it accomplish this! Take, for example, our poor Thomas; though formed for the best society, nothing could ever induce him to make a step or utter a word that savoured of paying court to any one for the sake of his rank. He would do for an earl what he would do for the commonest youth of his acquaintance, and, if he could help it, nothing more. He had the spirit of that Maréchal de Duras, who said to Louis XIV. one day, that he defied him, with all his power, to make him sad for more than a quarter of an hour. He had as much pleasure in stopping for a few days at the poorest gentilhommerie as at one of the finest castles in England, where, I promise you, no one ever heard a compliment from his lips verging in the remotest degree towards that of the Abbé de Polignac when he replied to the king, who expressed regret at his being caught in the rain, "La pluie de Marly ne mouille point."

What youth can ever comprehend "all the littleness of the great?" "Passez-moi cette expression," said De Neuville, "toutes les petitesses des grands?" At the adoration of the cross, in Holy Week, when at the court of Louis XIV., the Lorrain princes would never assist on account of disputed precedence with the dukes *. Was not that a claw of the lion? In the cahiers de la noblesse, in 1789, some of the nobles propose that all gentlemen should wear a distinctive mark, in order that they may be externally distinguishable †. What do you think of that idea? After hearing all the wise panegyrists of symbolism, was not that an instance? But let us look at home. Who can describe all the inhumanity and vulgarity of men newly come to a great estate and name, and "solidly spoiled"

* Mém. de St.-Simon.

† De Tocqueville, L'Ancien Régime et la Revolution, 427.

by such honours, as the Duc de Saint-Simon says? You say it is only that they are oppressed with the multitude of affairs consequent on such a vast and sudden increase of property, or, perhaps, that their heads are a little turned by it, and that we should hold them excused. It matters not much, perhaps, what we think of them; but what loss must they not have suffered themselves before things could come to such a pass! You say their heads are turned, but I should like to know where their hearts are all this while.

"Such is the contagion of prosperity," says the Père de Neuville, "that it takes away more greatness than it gives. Years of wisdom seldom hold against a moment of elevation. Men worthy of every thing when they were nothing, become unworthy of any thing when they are something; and losing on the side of sentiment more than they gain in fortune, they become degraded in greatness and by greatness." Riches of themselves are opposed to manhood. In the Bible the very name of man is used to express humbleness and subjection, in contradistinction to the pride of the rich,—"in labore hominum non sunt, et cum hominibus non flagellabuntur *." "The rich," says St. Augustin, "have raised themselves above all that exists, in the thought and affection of their heart. They have passed beyond the common bounds of nature; they do not think themselves like other men †." "If this son of an oyster-seller in winter and of cucumbers in summer were anatomized now and dissected," says Congreve's Sir Samson, "he has organs and vessels within him like another. These things are unaccountable and unreasonable." As for scrutinizing themselves, the rich defy you; though a little sense and a small fortune may render you in their eyes like a writ of inquiry into their titles and estates. By means of their splendid solitudes, and their tall porters with faces that do not exactly bear a welcome, and their own cool courage in contravening the ordinary usages of civilized society, emancipating themselves from duties which can least be dispensed with, they seem to possess the power, like Jupiter, of concealing themselves and their favourites in such a golden cloud, that not even the eye of the sun can discover their

* S. Melit. Clavis. de Homine. † In Ps. lxxii.

goings on. If there should at last occur a little vexation to wound their susceptibility, some of them, like one described by the Duc de Saint-Simon, will be ready to shut themselves up for ever, to die of pride after having always lived on it. Even Homer remarked these effects, and said,

Αἰεὶ δ' ὀπλοτέρων ἀνδρῶν φρένες ἠερέθονται.

It was owing to this pride of greatness, which, in respect to manners at the present day, is as strong as ever even in France after her many revolutions, that the Christian Church in early times was so much condemned as opening a door to all "derogation and equality;" and a recent author points out a curious instance, that might awaken in some breasts a desire to see called again into vital action a principle of truth which can never be sacrificed to the conventional exigencies of any age without a breaking of hearts and a violation of nature. A calumniator and contemporary of St. Callistus says of that pontiff, "If maidens refuse to take a husband from men of their rank, Callistus allows them to marry any man of inferior condition that they may choose, whether a slave or a freeman; and he regards as legitimate this union which the laws forbid *." The laws Julia and Papia forbad, in fact, girls of a senatorial family to marry a man below their rank. Such a marriage was regarded as concubinage. The Christian doctrine could not accept either the exclusions pronounced by aristocratic laws, or the disorder consequent on them. Pope St. Callistus, therefore, taught that the noble and the slave had the same obligations, and that pride must not interfere with what was lawful. Numbers of noble maidens had embraced Christianity, and it became difficult for them to find a Christian husband of their rank. Therefore, without proposing a convent as their only resource, they were allowed by Christian liberty to espouse an inferior. For this the pope was condemned by the calumniator whose work has lately made such a noise in the world. But how could the pontiff have insisted on obeying the laws Papia and Julia, and on despising the laws of that equality and fraternity which united the disciples of Jesus Christ †?

* Philosophumena. † Cruice, Hist. de l'Eglise Rom. 350.

However, we have not to go back to the second century to find among the long grown-up members of society contrasts to the spirit of the Church in this respect; and though in France the barrier between nobles and others seems in regard to marriage more insurmountable than elsewhere, it happens most unfortunately that we can find these contrasts in abundance near at home. Not to speak of the manners and theories of only some individuals, who, if they come to wive it wealthily, conclude that it must needs be happily, and to whom nothing comes amiss so money comes withal, it seems difficult to deny the justice of what a recent traveller has said respecting our whole nation, which, he says, must be held responsible for that despotism of expense which has no other origin but pride. "Her prosperity," he says, "and the splendour she has thrown upon vulgar aims, are the very argument of materialism. Her success encourages base wealth. Who can propose to youth purity and wisdom when English success has grown out of the very renunciation of principles and the dedication to outsides? Hence it has come that not the aims of a manly life, but the means of meeting a certain ponderous expense, is that which is to be considered by a youth in England emerging from his minority." "Was it the true lord or his ghost that was seen in town?" asks Clearaccount; to whom Subtleman replies, "It was his ghost, to be sure; for a nobleman without an estate is but the shadow of a lord." This is the notion that the writer just cited combats; and you observe how he would be for retaining the spirit of the bower, which is content with

"The bank whereon the wild thyme blows."

But what in reality is to be thought of that youthful spirit? Is it not merely a piece of silliness, like every thing else found in such company, absolutely antagonistic to the happiness and true dignity of civilized life? In reply to such suggestions it would be idle to launch forth in praise of humility, making it a theme for schoolboy declamation; but it may be as novel and interesting, even in a literary point of view, as it will be useful in regard to the interests of humanity and religion, to take notice of what some very eminent men, the farthest removed from commonplace spouters, have remarked respecting it.

"Fides est humilium non superborum," says the profound and penetrating logician, St. Augustin. If so, it is only to be wondered at that there should be any faith among the middle and upper ranks out of the bower. At all events, the proposition leaves no doubt as to the importance of the spirit which is predominant in the latter. But, again, hear what this surpassing genius lays down. "The only roads to truth are these,—first, humility; secondly, humility; thirdly, humility; and, as often as you would ask, I would say this, there are no other precepts, but only humility, which must precede, and accompany, and follow whatever we do well; and to this is opposed the vain learning which leads us to search into things that are not profitable for the future life." Rodriguez dwells on the danger incurred by religious orders when a different standard of perfection is practically adopted than that of the common humility to which childhood and youth, as we shall soon see, can attain in a delightful way of their own, as well as the most instructed and cautious saints. St. Augustin goes so far as to use these words, which, excepting in the Children's Bower, one might almost fear to cite. "The humility of the Publican was more agreeable to God, even in the midst of his sins, than the pride of the Pharisees even in the midst of their many virtues. Humility is the abridgment of Christianity *." The historical fact indeed is, that none but the humble accepted the Christian religion. "It was the great who persecuted Jesus Christ," remarks St. Augustin. It was the domestics of the great, like the servant whose taunt caused Peter to deny Him, who joined in rejecting Him. "It was the humble common people, removed from their influence, with the children, that honoured Him †." It was the youths that prepared and arranged a triumphal entry for Him into Jerusalem. It was the grown-up people that conspired and achieved his death. The Pagans thought that it was a religion only fit for children, women, and the lowest of the low in the social scale; and it is certainly these three classes that still furnish it in largest numbers with its real disciples. "The learned and the worldly wise, with some of the philosophers, in this respect know better," as an old writer says, "how to act

* In Ps. xciii. † In Ps. iii.

their part than to lay their scene, which is placed as far from the Children's Bower as it is from the Holy City. They lay it now in India with its castes, or in pagan Rome with its oligarchal legislation. They are like him who went to Greece, when subjected to the Turks, to get philosophy. They have not chronology enough to tell the clock of time." The hand of that clock now points to the hour which dismisses the world, with all its schools of wise men, and all its confederates of proud men, and all its conventional laws of vain men, and calls the children to stand as models for the human race. Let us observe, then, what can be learned in this respect from these models, which represent to us the characters that are fit for the kingdom of heaven.

"Children," say men competent to teach us on such high themes, "are holy; ask not then if they are humble. They are humble; ask not then if they are holy." If it was we who said this, there would be no end of distinctions demanded; but these are not our words, so let them stand. Children and the young are humble without affectation. Of course they know what they can do in their small way, but it does not make them proud or disdainful of others. If their elders were to copy them in this respect, they would have this characteristic of all great men, that while knowing their business, and knowing that they know it, they would not think much of themselves on that account. As a celebrated author says of Arnolfo and Albert Durer, while excelling and knowing that they excel, "they would not expect their fellow-men therefore, to fall down and worship them. They would have an undersense of powerlessness, feeling that the greatness is not in them but through them; and they would be full of respect for every other man they met, being endlessly, foolishly, incredibly merciful*." Children and the young are meek and humble of heart; they begin where the great French ladies of the seventeenth century used to end; with a practical and effective humility, turning from all human grandeur unto nature, and moved by the impressions of grace to God. "The Duchesse de Chevreuse," says Cousin, "had seen fall around her in succes-

* Ruskin.

sion all that she had loved. She recognized that she had given up her soul to chimeras, and wishing to mortify herself in the sentiment which had deceived her, the lofty-minded duchess became the most humble of women; renouncing all grandeur, and passing the rest of her life in a modest country-house at Gagry, where she died, forbidding all solemnity at her funeral, or the bestowing on her any of the titles which she had learned to despise*." So this great duchess, virtually at least, if not literally, acted the same part as we saw Gerson play. We may say, she withdrew, like him, to the Children's Bower.

In truth, the manners of the young in respect to humility are so very charming, and even attractive to nature's eye, that one cannot wonder when those who have had longest experience of the contrary follow these examples, and resolve for the rest of their lives to converse with them exclusively, shunning thenceforth what had caused them suffering and disgust; though it would perhaps be wiser in them to follow the suggestions here proposed, and by studying the spirit of the bower to transfer its manners, as can always be most easily done, to the different spheres of life in which they may have been placed. For in every one of those relations this spirit, with the manners consequent on it, would be found applicable, and most practically useful and felicitous, as will be obvious at once, if we only consider in detail how that spirit works and shows itself.

"O my stars!" exclaims Malefort, "who can but doat on this humility, this sweetness!" In the first place, it is developed in a love for what is common and lowly in humanity, as opposed to the disdain with which the common and the lowly are regarded by grown-up people, living and thinking after the way of the world that loves distinction.

This is a property of early life so full of useful results, that Charles Lamb, on one occasion, sums up his advice to a friend in these words, "Think about common things more." I know that in our times, even this idea is by some persons much suspected. Children are even warned against it. And yet religion itself seems to favour it. I suppose that the celebrated

* Madame de Chevreuse, 229.

and holy sister Rosalie will be accepted as a competent exponent of what it thinks. Well, what used she to say oftenest to her sisters? "My children," they used to hear from her, "let us become extraordinary by dint of being common,"—"Soyons extraordinaires à force d'être ordinaires*." There has been nothing said here or elsewhere stronger than that, I trow. But we are now only concerned with this principle in relation to the lowly in our social order. Let us return to it under that form of development.

A recent traveller seems to think that we have many amongst us like Marcellus, of whom Tacitus says, "neque morum spernendus habebatur nisi quod paupertatem præcipuum malorum credebat." He says that poverty is a reproach in England. Nelson, he continues, uttered these words, "The want of fortune is a crime which I can never get over." Sydney Smith said, "Poverty is infamous in England." And a recent writer speaks, in reference to a private and scholastic life, of "the grave moral deterioration which follows an empty exchequer." Malthus finds no cover laid at nature's table for the labourer's son. When Sir S. Romilly proposed his bill forbidding parish officers to bind children apprentices at a greater distance than forty miles from their home, statesmen opposed it, one of whom said, "Though in the higher ranks to cultivate family affections was a good thing, 'twas not so among the lower orders. Better take them away from those who might deprave them. And it was highly injurious to trade to stop binding to manufacturers." How shocking, and even marvellous does all this sound in the bower, where we must feel that nature fashioned us all in one mould! How unnatural any where! and, besides, how ungrateful is it! for when these rich people fall into misfortune, where do they find most sympathy? If they have ever had any humanity at all, it is from the poor, from sweet humble friends amongst them, from servants that once lived with them, from simple creatures that used to toil for them, from indigent beggars that had been given some crumbs at their gate. These are the persons who now weep and sob to hear of what has happened, months after the event, who at the first news of it

* Le Vicomte de Melun, Vie de la Sœur Rosalie.

come from far to visit them; who fall sick, and take to their beds, perhaps, thinking of their misfortune; who testify by letters, by tears that they seek to hide, and by every way that nature knows of, how they commiserate their calamity. Nor should this surprise us. They can sympathize best with others who feel most deeply their own afflictions. When the common people lose those whom they loved, "they have," as Constance says, "no rule nor method for their grief; no pomp of black and darkened rooms; no formal month for visits on their bed; they are content with the slight mourning of a broken heart, and all their form is tears." The social humility of early life is seen then, first, in its good feeling towards all men, irrespective of their rank or fortune. Children, like the common people, respect rank. Spectators, mounted on a tree or standing on a wall, show them man or woman in royal state, like the young king of Portugal, or like Marie Amelie fallen from it, with the spirit of a St. Louis, or what St. Beuve calls "that beauty of soul which a person of quality ought to have," and they feel the blood run cold through them. They are all reverence, all admiration, instinctively agreeing with the poet, who says that

> "Where heavenly virtue in high-blooded veins
> Is lodged, and can agree, men should kneel down;
> And well they may, it is so seldom seen."

But as for rank, look you, in the abstract, they "love it to the worth of't, and no farther." What they have most commonly before them is goodness in the ordinary file; and their willingness to love this constitutes, perhaps, of all its traits, that which is most difficult for the elder great to realize. In France, during what is erroneously termed the Ancien Régime, the whole nation was divided, as De Tocqueville tells us, into an immense number of small sections, each of them disdaining, and often detesting the other. It was not merely the noble that despised the bourgeois; in the class of the latter there were divisions almost "ad infinitum," between which there were incessant struggles for precedence. Separated by impassable barriers, persons belonging to the different sections of the community would never either intermarry, or maintain intimate

relations with each other; and this author is pleased to distinguish our nation as being unlike all others at that epoch, in having retained the disposition which is more congenial with the young *. "The second of the two great attributes of youth," says Cardinal Palæotus, addressing the first nobility of Bologna, "is humility, for the young are not puffed up by riches, or honour, or nobility of birth" (how some disciplines must have changed nature!); "they arrogate nothing to themselves; they take no airs upon them; they refer all care of themselves to their parents; they hear them and follow them; they never speak of themselves, and they are so subject to their tutors that they do not differ from servants; and therefore the Gospel tells us, 'that whoever will humble himself like one of these, shall be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven †.'" Disdain never enters the Children's Bower. Let us call to witness the youngest that we find in it. Little John elicited the observation of many in regard to the absence of this quality. "I know not how it is," a lady remarked, "he seems to carry his head above all the other children one sees here. It is not pride; for though 'tis a boy, trick'd in neat and handsome fashion, I see that he makes friends of the common working lads, and seems even quite fond of their company." "He was a fine good boy," said the driver of a fly; "he always used to speak to me just as if I was his equal." His playmates were sometimes poor boys, for

> "The mightiest space in fortune nature brings
> To join like likes and kiss like native things."

One day, hearing that the rest of them were invited out to a party, and that he and his little sister were to be left at home, he consoled her by saying, "Well, you know it is all right for them to go who are so dandified, but you and I are coarse, May!" In point of fact, however, the dandy was as humble and popular as himself; for only mark that eldest brother. Strictly applicable to him were the Homeric lines,—

* L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution.

† De Bonon. Eccl. Admin. P. vii. 568.

ἀφνειὸς βιότοιο, φίλος δ' ἦν ἀνθρώποισι·
πάντας γὰρ φιλέεσκεν.

Aware of what he was entitled to by his birth and name, with all his tact and appreciation of good company, the unconscious love of equality appeared in his unstudied words and actions. Excepting from the consideration he showed to others, no one could have supposed that he had any sense of what was due to himself. Tradespeople, after his death, said that they had always been much struck with his way of accosting them in their shops, so unlike, as they added, the haughty, commanding, and disdainful manner of other young men of fortune. But all this he did unconsciously, and not like the M. de Vaudemont, who, in his highest fortune, as Saint-Simon says, was as ambitious of the love of tradesmen and artisans as of that of the most distinguished persons *. Our Tom's undesigning familiarity resembled rather that of the Prince de Conti, that general favourite, who did every thing naturally, really "wishing to please a shoemaker, a laquais, or a porter, as much as he would a minister of state or a great nobleman †," which example shows that such manners, even at the court of Louis XIV., would not have been deemed a derogation in any one. If you met him with some common humble man, you would see one of whom you might say, "nought knowing of whence he is, nor that he is better than some sailor, master of a full poor boat, and his no greater father." Though he could speak French like a Parisian, he did not resemble Overbury's affectate traveller, who "speaks his own language with shame and lisping, and who will choake rather than confesse beere good drinke, who maintains his reputation by naming great men familiarly, who comes still from great personages, but goes with mean." It is a strong contrast that you behold in him. He would never seek to hook himself on to a man of high rank, either through interest or through vanity; his affections are most humble; he has no ambition to see a goodlier place. He is not like so many of his own position, *ὑπέρβιον ὕβριν ἔχοντες*. He was affable with the lowest, never vulgar. With all his

* Mém. de Saint-Simon, ii. † Tom. xiv.

familiar friendly intercourse with what is most common in the social scale, he had the tastes and the tone of your old nobility; and whenever it was a question of saving money, he felt not so much an instinctive aversion for what is vulgar, as an unconscious necessity for having regard to what his own position required in keeping aloof from it. Now these are examples that, however trifling they may appear in themselves, teach much. Men might catch from them in this respect a trait even of genius; for genius, like such youth, loves without lowering itself to gossip with the common people. And if men are too proud to mix with them at times, even "within some gentle ostelrie," like Chaucer and his pilgrims, though they may possess the learning of an antiquary, they will never be able to relish the ancient poetry of England; and it is paying somewhat dear for pride, methinks, to lose that pleasure. A little romance, besides, in which youth is seldom wanting, can raise every thing. Where the boy, in an old play, says that it will show ill-favouredly to have a grocer's 'prentice seen at court, the citizen replies, "Will it so, sir? You are well read in histories! I pray you, what was Sir Dagonet? Was not he 'prentice to a grocer in London? Read the play of the Four 'Prentices of London, where they toss their pikes so." But children, like the common people, will find a way of escape, without even the aid of such associations, to spots and companies that yield a pleasure of their own. Our street pump is, indeed, a poor substitute for the fountain; but still there are nooks and corners, or steps or open spaces where they congregate, with all blue or white aproned sleeves-turn'd-up juveniles, and all merry combatants with hand-baskets, all flat-capped 'prentices, fustianed-jacket and blouse-belted dandies, with all the swarming generation of whistling Harrys and silver-toned singing Bills; while that kind of happy pause takes place every now and then in the labour of the day, which might remind one of the meeting at the fountain, when the pitcher is rested on the edge of it, and the breath of the bearer is drawn deeply, and the hair swept from the forehead, and the uprightness of the form declined against the marble ledge, and the sound of the kind word or light laugh mixes with the trickle of the falling water, heard shriller and shriller as the pitcher

fills. "What pause is so sweet as that," exclaims Ruskin, "so full of the depth of ancient days, so softened with the calm of pastoral solitude!" It is pleasant to trace the tastes of the Children's Bower in this respect in former times, and in different kinds of characters. We find them not alone at the court of Louis XIV., but even with Pepys. Thus in his Diary we read, "All the afternoon among my workmen, and did give them drink, and very merry with them, it being my luck to meet with a sort of drolling workmen on all occasions;" and elsewhere we find him playing Mayhew's part, saying, "Homewards, and took up a boy that had a lanthorne, that was picking up of rags, and had great discourse with him how he could get sometimes three or four bushells of rags in a day, and got threepence a bushell for them; and many other discourses, what, and how many ways there are for poor children to get their livings honestly *." Fuller, when collecting materials for his historical works, would listen for hours together to the common people's accounts of local traditions; and many good old English words, lost but for him, are found accordingly in his writings. These reports and sayings of the common people are to students of that kind as dear as was the ὡς λέγουσι to the Father of history. Such familiarity is, in general, a trait of superior minds and true-hearted characters. "The higher a man stands," says Ruskin, "the more the word 'vulgar' becomes unintelligible to him." It is, we are told, even in regard to the spiritual life, an index of perfection; as when we read that St. Margaret, of the order of St. Dominick, heard these words in answer to her prayer to be shown the road of the ancient fathers, "La perfection des pères anciens a esté, aymer Dieu, se m'espriser soymesme, ne despriser et ne juger personne †." It is St. Chrysostom who remarks, that children never feel shame at the destitution of their parents, and that not for an instant would they exchange them if they could for the richest. John Cavette, when a student at St. Acheul, used to tell his fellow-scholars all about his family, how they used to live at home on alms, and how he owed the very clothes he

* Diary of Sam. Pepys, i. 202.

† Oultreman, Le Pedagogue Chrestien.

wore to the charity of Christians. In general, others might learn from the spirit of early life to esteem qualities above rank, a way of thinking which in the world would pass for insanity; for where its spirit predominates, as in certain circles, you may wait long enough to find proof that any one will be thought more of for not being seen, as Tacitus tells us was once the case in Rome. In an old ballad, Biondinetta, the Venetian water-girl, walks down the Piazzetta. Whom will she accept? Titian has promised to paint her. The Doge proposed to crown her in the Bucentaur; Mocenigo offered to build her a palace of looking-glass; but she prefers Tonin the gondolier, and passes on laughing.

We have already glanced at the evils produced in the world by what may be termed the genius of expense ministering to pride. In the Children's Bower, even men φιλοκτεανώτατοι πάντων might learn to adopt a different spirit from observing the felicity and the charm that exist without it; for the truth is, that it is a genius which has no attractions even to form a temptation for the humble, and consequently none for the young. Again I must cite little John—

> "The courtier's pride he laughed at,
> And look'd upon things precious, as they were
> The common muck o' the world."

Partly, no doubt, because he never wished for such a thing, but also partly, perhaps, through a certain indistinct dread almost amounting to superstition in those who loved him, which made them think that they might preserve his life by keeping him aloof from any thing like the luxury of the rich, he never had an expensive toy, a costly book, or anything but what you might have thought belonged to some poor boy. His prayer-books even were little cheap old-thumbed things. With his "own money" he bought for fourpence a small black cross, at his little sister's shop on the head of the stairs, for the Sainte-Enfance, and that was the cross which was buried with him, placed upon his breast. He had no wish to have fine things. If he heard that any object, however trifling, was to be bought for him, he would say, "Oh, pa! I don't want it; now pray don't;" and then for the smallest present he would say, "Oh!

I thank you very much." Children have not what St. Augustin calls the love of Babylon. "Look," he says, "at the house of a great man. What riches does it contain! how it abounds in everything! What furniture, what plate, what a number of servants, how many horses and other animals; how much to charm the eyes in marbles, columns, and vast apartments! One loves such houses, but this love is still a love of Babylon*." Only let him have a home of any sort, and a child will never sigh at wanting any of these things. Young people, moreover, have especial reasons of their own for not overmuch liking that kind of house, in which the fear of breaking fragile magnificence, "glittering need-nots to human happiness," tends to a sort of pagan worship of Penates and Lares. Those precautions of the rich which are necessary to prevent hourly catastrophes, extending from the pantry and the chimney-corner to the furniture in general, will every day involve a lively boy in sufficient trouble and restraint to make him desire to be "paterni laris inops," or to be born, as the pagans used to say, with a small sideboard—"parvo sub lare." He cares not a rush for Majolica dishes, Venetian glasses, or tables of Sevres porcelain. The young will often talk like the woodland fellow in Shakspeare, who shows no anxiety to be with the courtiers of him who keeps the great fire. Almost naturally each of them will say like him, "I am for the house with the narrow gate, which I take to be too little for pomp to enter; those that humble themselves may, but others will be for going round to the broad gate."

> "Yet who would change their soft but solid joys,
> For empty shows and senseless noise;
> And all which rank ambition breeds,
> Which seem such beauteous flowers, and are such poisonous weeds†?"

Children, who are essentially sociable in their nature, have most frequently certain predilections even respecting the site of a dwelling, which might convey a useful lesson to those who, disregarding the natural tendency of the Christian civilization, which is to draw men into society, as Cardinal Palæotus

* In Ps. lxiv. † Cowley.

shows*, affect solitude through pride, desire to be isolated and far removed from the rest of the world, intrenched, as an old French writer says, in some "gentilhommière," in the midst of hares and partridges, "avec des gens rustres et brutaux;" or, as we might say, "with those rough things who never knew manners nor smooth humanity."

"He moste needes walke in woode that may not walke in towne."

But it is a proud and inhuman disposition to which there seems to be a reference in the sacred words, "numquid habitabitis vos soli in medio terræ?" At all events, formerly in preferring such a locality, pride had, it must be confessed, rather a grim escort of qualities with her, combining to prompt the choice. It is a trite subject. One instance may suffice. In a wild and desert part of Hungary is seated the ancient castle of Hrisco, an old giant of stone, which frowns from the top of a precipitous rock. Before the gate the statue of a monk raises his hand, as if against the castle, with a menacing gesture. These dark walls, says the legend, were witnesses of many crimes. Its dungeons used to contain victims without number; and under the oaken ceilings of its vast halls resounded the horrible orgies of insensate revellers. A monk from a convent of the same country endeavoured more than once to touch the proud heart of the wicked castelain. While there he was listened to and obeyed; but no sooner had he left the castle by one door, than every thing horrible came in at another. At last, one day on departing, he said aloud, "If it is my presence that you want to teach you humility, you shall have it for ever." Then on the threshold stopping, and turning about to face the castle, he raised his hand to threaten it. His threat became instantly fixed in stone a statue. The monk had vanished; the awful image was what remained. The guardian, who now shows the place, affirms that in the dark autumnal evenings the soul of that monk passes through the long corridors, sighing and lamenting. The castle is deserted, and spirits only, it is said, haunt the old walls which once were the abode of pride, with all the crimes that served it.

* De Bonon. Eccl. Admin. P. i.

We have wandered far from the examples yielded by our present state of civilization; but yet the fact under another form is still visible, and the moral from it continues to be the same; and pride, with severe tempers, still seeks a desert to hide itself in. But the spirit of the bower can hardly be made to agree with it in this appreciation. One might even say, that it is more natural for the young to prefer to such loneliness a locality which gives them companions and variety, though it were only a residence in some village, like that which Chaucer speaks of, called "Bob-up-and-down." The natural tastes of children, however, inclined to admire the country, might teach men to approve, at least occasionally, of what the wise will never condemn, pleasant neighbours, domestic and social evenings, suburban retreats, and gardens filled with cheerful people,—homes near which there are labyrinths to run and laugh in, boats of all kinds to hire, concerts in the open air to listen to, lamps lit at night to walk by; toy-shops, and print-shops, and hardware-shops to stop at; life in many forms to wonder at, sweet benign faces to smile at, as those of so many unknown brothers and sisters, gentle congenial persons to become acquainted with, merry throngs to see and mingle with, and even, when they do not prefer the marrowbone stage, an omnibus to travel by, to leap into and leap out of, and to scramble upon, and let oneself down from while at its full speed, or, even after reading Leigh Hunt's description of its inside, to be gathered, at least on a wet day, in common, along with all sorts, into its friendly bosom.

But in every respect, whether in town or country, it is difficult not to learn somewhat from observing the contrast between the spirit of the bower and that of the grave, wise, noble, honourable, illustrious, puissant, and right worshipful family of the 'formals.' In regard to affinity with popular life, one might remark also the excellence of loving to be like the young, who, if left to themselves, would resemble common people both on working-days and on holidays, wishing to labour like every one else when all are working, to rest and be amused like every one else when all are out taking their pleasure, so adopting the custom of the bees, as described by Virgil in the line

"Omnibus una quies operum, labor omnibus unus."

In dress, also, the genius of the Children's Bower might often shame the halls of their elders, where, if cheapness and simplicity be adopted, it is through being supremely proud, delicate, and attentive as to their own social and unquestionable pre-eminence, affecting, like Turenne, to make the picture stand out more by the shade; and so assuming plainness, disdaining colour, and choosing whatever is more opposed to that in which nature, genius, and youth also most delight. "It is amusing to remark," says Dugald Stewart, "the solicitude in which the higher orders in the monarchies of modern Europe avoid every circumstance in their exterior appearance and manner which, by the most remote association, may in the minds of others connect them with the ideas of the multitude." And yet the philosopher seems to be himself under the same impression; for he says elsewhere, "It is evident that, as far as the agreeable effect of a fashion in dress arises from association, the effect will continue only while it is confined to the higher orders. When it is adopted by the multitude it not only ceases to be associated with ideas of taste and refinement, but it is associated with ideas of affectation, absurd imitation, and vulgarity." A youth would teach us better on this point than a metaphysician. He has a dress for the occasion; at work, disdaining not to wear cerulean socks, without dreaming of their being once appropriate to scholars—in bad weather he is like a horse-boy—abroad on a wet day, like a sailor, at home upon a week-day, he is "so uniform in spite of handsomeness, shows such a bold contempt of comeliness, that 'tis not strange all should feel love for him;" but for the saunter, when the sun shines, something bright and of harmonious colour, that sets off good looks must be expected. "A man," says Fuller, "ought to play his part well, and not resemble the person who, being to act Theseus coming out of hell, could not for a long time be persuaded to wear sooty clothes proper for his part, but would needs come out in a white satin doublet; so men would fain act in an attire which seems needful only to an exaggerated pride the part of humility." St. Cyprian speaks of wearing a simple and plebeian dress, as an index of a free and humble mind. Children prefer it at times for comfort, and even in point of taste. How boys in their old blouse and trousers, with more

neutral tints on them than Murillo himself could imitate, stained and faded, and rent and patched, yet all the while "respectable," will enjoy the saying of the Czar Peter, on observing the many splendid dresses of the Marquis de Nesle, who was appointed by the regent to attend him on his visit to Paris. This marquis, as the Marquis d'Argenson relates in his memoirs, piquing himself on being very magnificent, had provided a change of clothes for himself for every day. All the return he had for it from the Czar was this prince saying to some one, "Truly I pity poor M. de Nesle for having so bad a tailor that he can't get a dress to suit him." Yet this fondness for what is common in regard to clothes implies no derogation in a youth. You might meet the eldest boy of the bower sometimes dressed like a common seaman; but though there might be a dozen sailors with him similarly attired, you could distinguish him at once as the gentleman. When the spirit of the bower is sacrificed to personal vanity, men become, as an old dramatist says, "a sort of Indians in their religion and worship, the first thing they see in the morning being their own reflection in the glass, and some of them have then such faces that might frighten them into devotion, and make them right Indians worshipping the devil." A hatred of fastidious dandyism, on all occasions, belongs to that spirit of humanity which is an attribute of youth. That spirit seeks fellowship, dislikes selfish distinctions—would like best what all the world wears; and perhaps, for once, it will philosophize, defend itself, and cite the poet's lines in its own justification, saying, "Why not accept what is made for others of my age and size?"

> "In Yorkshire warehouses and Cranbourne-alley,
> 'Tis wonderful how shoes and feet will tally;
> As honest Crispin understands his trade,
> On the true human scale his lasts are made;
> The measure of each sex and age to hit,
> And every shoe, as if bespoke, will fit."

But the social humility of childhood and youth is developed in more important relations than any we have as yet noticed. Men may learn from it to control their susceptibility of offence, and to evince a respectful demeanour towards all the world.

To be generous, guiltless, and of free disposition, is to take those things for bird-bolts that some deem cannon bullets. Youth, full of mannerly forbearance, will endure sharp rebukes without a murmur, as if it felt that there is no railing in a known discreet man, though he do nothing but reprove. No one, as we have before often remarked, could offend Tom. He did not seem to understand what the word meant, and as for the thing, "he knew not how it tasted, though it were dished for him to try how." All he knew of it was that the proclaimed offender was an honest fellow, and why he should be angry with him, heaven itself, if you will believe him, wotting no more than he, was ignorant. In truth, he was the last to feel hurt at what was aimed against himself. Then,

> "Though he were gentil born and fresh and gay,
> And goodly for to see, he was humble and free."

As for showing consideration and respect, who might not learn somewhat from observing him, as to the graceful mode of evincing both? To every one over his own age he used to say, in a boyish way, "Sir;" and the tradespeople, as we have lately heard, were struck with his modest, unassuming way in accosting them. The middle of humanity he respected, which trait is always the true touchstone to detect the humble.

From childhood and youth may be learned, also, that deep humility which consists in having a lowly opinion of one's own merits.

Johnson says, that "we always think ourselves better than we are, and are desirous that others should think us still better than we think ourselves." If it be so, let us make haste to the bower, where we must leave behind us this haughtiness, this odious and supremely ridiculous conceit. The children, if we watch them, will soon shame us out of it. Nothing that they suffer will seem to themselves harsh or unfitting. It will all be explained, as the lad Lyis accounted for his own trammels by saying, "Of course it's so. How should it be otherwise? I am not yet old enough;" and like that youth, they will even, after being a little humbled, desire their monitor, as Plato observes, in a very boyish and affectionate manner, "to say over again to their companions what he had been saying to

themselves *." Unaffected humility appears on their countenance and in their conduct, in their actions and in their words. They do not talk about it; but, as the Père Boutauld says, "they are so humble in thought, that these impressions of their mind appear visibly marked in their eyes by modesty; they are humble, but not with affectation and through vanity; they neither praise nor blame themselves; they speak neither well nor ill of themselves; they do not consider themselves as being more imperfect than others, but as being nothing, of which there is nothing to say, and of which one need never speak. Now this," he adds, "is the perfection of humility †."

But let us observe examples; and I do not esteem insipid the most minute details on such a subject, however puerile they may seem, or however often repeated. Our Thomas was the humblest of the humble, "although he knew it not," as Pope says of the best good Christian; he esteemed himself as nothing. A few days before he fell sick, he said gravely, "There is one, I know, that will never be worthy of seeing dear little John again." He meant himself. This youth, who was our pride, gay, ever active, eager of victory in all manly sports, was, I admit, somewhat impatient of a hard bit. What noble hearts are not?

Οἶσθ' οἷαι νέου ἀνδρὸς ὑπερβασίαι ταλέθουσι·
Καιπνότερος μὲν γάρ τε νόος, λεπτὴ δέ τε μῆτις.

Sometimes he seemed deeply moved at being refused, when he desired a thing ardently which was not expedient, but which attracted him by its novelty. He would then fight hard to have his way; but in that breast "Virtue sat mistress, Passion but a guest;" a few gentle words never failed to make him yield; and then, like a child, he would do just what you bid him, and in the way you bid him. Antoine Malot, as we read, was so humble, that he thought himself undeserving of any favour. His superiors, therefore, in denying him any thing, never thought it necessary to have recourse to many words in order to sweeten the refusal. Similarly, our little John one day, when he was not allowed to go with the rest to hear Henry Russell, of whose songs he was so passionately fond, never complained;

* Lysis. † Les Conseilles de la Sagesse.

and when some one found him left alone, and cried out that it was unfair, he would not hear of such a thing, but said, "Oh, pa! you know I'm too young to go to a concert." Once his companions all went to a review of yeomanry. It was quite an event for that neighbourhood, as the corps actually mustered some fifteen men, all known well in the village, though not as yet noted for military glory. But that did not matter much. Well, he, little mite, if he went at all, and how foolish for him to want to go! must even walk on his two feet with his good young lady governess, for she could not mount a horse like the others. So they set off together, humbly and lovingly. Arrived at four ways, where a finger-post stood for directing travellers, she could not read English, and he was no great dab at letters himself. However, putting their heads together, they managed to hit on the right road, and they even reached the ground only a few minutes after the proud mounted troop cantered up to it. Little John could not endure to hear himself praised. About a month before his death, hearing a certain person for once in the way of superstition off his guard, say to a friend who came to see them, that there was a boy who had never been known to commit the slightest fault, hung down his head and stole aside, seeming to be quite put out. His eldest brother had lately attained an object of his high ambition—a dog-cart. John would look wistfully, almost respectfully at it; he would lend a hand, such as it was, to pull it out of the shed; he would mount into it before the real horse came, for his tall brother would turn horse for him in the shafts a moment; he would gaze admiringly when, after a space, brother and his groom issued forth to set at work in right earnest; and though there was then but one nag, the tandem being reserved for state occasions, every thing was so magnified and multiplied in his eyes, that you might have thought he was applying to it the Homeric lines—

Καρπαλίμως δ' ἔζευξαν ὑφ' ἅρμασιν ὠκέας ἵππους·

But, for an actual "ride" in it, that was altogether another thing. He was, however, dying to have one. Some very officious person having asked him, "Why does not he invite you?" "Oh!" he replied, "what should he take a poor little chap

like me for?" and then he could not help laughing heartily at what he had himself said. In truth, I believe he would have admitted at once the right of his brother, if, like De Quincey's, the other had assumed it, of having "twice in a year his foot placed on his own neck, in token of the eternal deference he owed to one so much older than himself, so much wiser, stronger, braver, more beautiful, and more swift of foot*." The fact was, he was so humble, that he thought himself nothing. A few days before his death, on his return after being on the box of a hired fly, which answered him just as well as if it had been his great-grandfather's coach and six, he said to his little sister, "I like that coachman very much; but he had no business to say to Nomm that I seemed full of thought."

All this is very puerile, you say. Well, be it so. Some, however, will like to hear a little more of it, for

> "Soft is the music that would charm for ever;
> The flower of sweetest smell is shy and lowly†."

"Bashfulness, another damsel of that gentle crew," might be obtained from the bower as a graceful companion of later years. In the world she is soon put to flight. "Shame's a baby," says its adept. Little John, though he would not have let you call him a baby, had certainly his share of it. He was somewhat afraid of accosting well-dressed strangers; and as for another telling them any thing in his own praise, he would say, in Shakspearian style, to the more courageous May, for touching that chord, "Is there no time or hole and corner to whistle off these secrets, but you must be tittle-tattling before all our guests?" This spirit belonged not only to little John, but even to his gay, joyous brother, who in that respect resembled Chaucer's knight:

> "And of his port as meke as is a mayde,
> He never yit no vilanie ne sayde
> In all his lyf unto no maner wight."

A little thing in the way of commendation would draw the blood into his cheek; and he used to express surprise how any

* Autob. i. † Wordsworth.

soldier could differ from Turenne, who, on his return from glorious campaigns, used to fly from applause, and fear even to appear before the king, lest he should be praised by him in presence of the court. He would always turn off the conversation from any thing that reflected credit on himself, and he had ever a fine action of some one else ready to relate, in order to shut people's mouths about what he had himself done. This youth was so far from self-conceit, that he who took most interest in him had to reverse the general rule, and try to inspire him with a better opinion of his own qualities than he had himself. He could never succeed in this policy, though the other would smile, as much as to say, Thank you; but it was plain enough that his self-slight was too deeply rooted to yield to any commendation. Of no one else he ever was heard to speak slightingly, though, like many others of his age, he was not without experience of that character which knows how to unite authority with a sarcastic vein. Its ridicule, levelled at him with the best of intentions, wounded those who heard it; but as for himself, though it certainly helped to confirm him in an unjust depreciation of his own qualities, he took it all as it was meant, good-naturedly and in the best part, as if he thought, what was not exactly true, that it was not a little misapplied. It never was able to shake him out of his saddle, so firm was his seat in the conscious nobleness of his nature. If the subject of conversation with his elders was at all grave, he would only permit himself to throw out a suggestion, and it was generally the best that could be offered. In questions of art he was as diffident as if he had not the talent which he possessed of knowing what was best. "I am no judge, of course," he would say; "but the picture that moves me most in the National Gallery is that of Christ stretched out dead, and his mother mourning over Him,"—alluding to the painting by Francia. His manner of expressing his own thoughts was to begin with "Don't you think so and so?" or "Used you not to say always?" or "It puts me in mind of what you used to say." Never did a magisterial sentence escape his teeth. Though never pretending it to be the result of "too much thinking," he loved to have "common thoughts." His deep humility made him distrust his own judgment, excepting when it was a question

of defending the character of an absent person, and then he knew better than every one else present. He never resented being rated or taxed with childish levity and ignorance; but he seemed only to love and respect the more him who used to say how it seemed only yesterday that he had carried him, for all his present tall joints, in his arms, dressed so smartly in white, with delicate fine hat, and most courteous feathers, which bowed the head, and nodded at all the poor women who used in passing to bless his pretty face, and how he had trained him up and watched over him *τυτθὸν ἐόντα*. Then the lad would laugh and recall some of his own childish pranks. A few hours before his death, that sorrowful friend kissed his poor hand. "Why do you do that?" he asked, withdrawing it hastily; and for the first time in his life looked at him displeased. It was the same feeling that inspired Louis Beauvais, the student of St. Acheul, when dying; for he would not through humility kiss the image of our Saviour on the cross, but only the wood of the cross *.

But we must pass on. From this humility of early life it is clear that manhood and age have to learn much that would do them good. That spirit entered, no doubt, into those bonds of affinity, which we before observed as assimilating youth to ancient Christianity. Men can learn from it, therefore, the most important of all lessons, a social as well as an intellectual and moral acquiescence in the Divine economy, which prepares them, by obedience to authority, for the happiness of the future life. But as that lesson has been previously delivered in connexion with other qualities of childhood and youth, we must not recur to it. Let us proceed to remark, as well as we can, the lessons of general wisdom which can be supplied in the Children's Bower, and which every one who is not a sophist professed may be competent to appreciate.

* Souvenirs de St. Acheul.

CHAPTER XVIII.

N oak copse, in which, if you shut your eyes, you can actually 'ose yourself—a thick tangled wood, the ground all spangled with blue, and pink, and yellow flowers, to which no one here, I suspect, has the smallest chance of being able to give the right names—with a little brook winding and bubbling on through it, so narrow, that even Jack can jump over, though his guardian can't for the life of her—with the thrush and the nightingale singing on the sprays all round you—such is the place that at this pass receives our company, who are, for the nonce, as Arcadian in their tastes as if they called each other Tityrus and Melibœus. At this moment they will all agree in saying, at least in the vernacular,—

"Nobis placeant ante omnia silvæ."

"Beneath the verdurous canopy, how sweet
To muse awhile, weaving delicious thought
In fancy's fairy loom *!"

What constellations of little shining flowers at our feet! Botanists tell us that nature seems to have been more solicitous to ensure the safety of the least considerable plants than of more stately vegetable productions. Alas! she seems less careful of you, little Jack, than of a tuft of moss. But then you are to revive elsewhere, you know; your bloom will be for ever; while it may be left to us to recall your image by seeing these coy forget-me-nots, as we ramble later through a wilderness like this, alone.

But a truce to such prophetic thoughts. We have, besides, at present, something else to do besides praising the woods. So let us attend. A proposition is here suggested by the subject of the last chapter, though many sagacious critics now-a-days

* H. I. J.

will see no connexion between them, which will appear to some persons to involve a monstrous exaggeration, if not a downright paradox. And yet, be it said, with all due respect to them, it will comprise neither the one nor the other. It is this,—that men can learn sense and wisdom from the Children's Bower. There now; make what you can of it. We shan't have to wait long to hear the snarling. People hitherto, no doubt, have been very condescending to us. Yes, it has been allowed us to affirm that innocence and simplicity, piety and the kind of poetic thing called ancient Christianity can be learned from children—all this is thought by some to be of no great practical value—they dare say it can be all found with the young, or at least in babyland, but sense and wisdom—oh! really, they must now be excused. If we go on to show or to pretend that sense and wisdom can be learned from company where there is no chin worth a beard, all that an intelligent person can do, they will tell us, will be to shut the book in disgust. Well, if they turn away from us, of course we cannot help it, and we are not to blame for their being unconvinced; though still they need not run so fast, for wisdom will not overtake them; but if they will stand like men, we are ready to do battle with them on this point.

——— *εἰσόκε δαίμων*
ἄμμε διακρίνῃ, δώῃ δ' ἑτέροισί γε νίκην.

We shall begin with a very modest challenge, and let Father Bonifacius advance first with his page open at the words, "De laudibus pueritiæ," and speaking as follows: "Observing how the first age of man is despised or accused of lightness, how this opinion pleases men, and proves injurious to boys and children, I thought that its refutation would be a service rendered to the Christian republic, and that it would be a pious work to undertake the defence of childhood, though I should have to oppose many. This I shall do, therefore; but with such moderation as neither to detract from true praise, nor to mingle false with it." There is nothing very novel or original, therefore, in our proposition, since it has been defended by so ancient an author. Neither is it calculated to startle the really intelligent at any time. "He was no ordinary boy," says a

late writer, alluding to Wordsworth, adding, "though it would be very wonderful to have revealed to us many a common child's thoughts." That's what he may well go on to say. To be sure, as we walk the streets, we might suppose that all children were extraordinary; for no nurse or mother is ever heard admonishing her charge, who is near a plash of mud deep enough to hide a small foot in, without adding audibly, "I never saw such a child!" Wonderful son that can so astonish a mother! But we must take these affirmations for what they are worth. It seems conceded, therefore, by some at least of the ancients and moderns, that young heads as well as hearts can have somewhat in them worth knowing. And, in truth, grown-up people might often apply to the former for instruction, as well as to the latter for increase of goodness. For theirs are

> "Sound sleep by night; study and ease
> Together mix'd; sweet recreation;
> And innocence, which most does please
> With meditation."

We hear a great deal at present about the education of children; but though there will be no going into a committee on it, we might also have matter to inquire about touching the education of their elders; for it is clear to common people like ourselves, that often manhood and age stand more in need of sense and wisdom than youth.

However, don't fall back on a fanciful bulwark of defence; we are not about to be confronted with any unhealthy evidences of precocious maturity. Each little witness that we have in view, fond of fun and frolic, was, like our John and Thomas, a boy, not a man—too much of a boy, in every sense of the word, to be ranked among phenomenal exceptions. He that will have a cake out of the wheat must tarry the grinding, and the bolting, and the leavening. Neither is it necessary to allude to what might be termed supernatural instances, which so often dictate words like those of our poet,—

> "So wise, so young, they say, do ne'er live long;
> Short summers lightly have a forward spring."

Others may tell you of the childhood of a Cardinal Bembo, of

a Tostatus, of a Politian, a Pascal, a Joseph Scaliger, a Ferdinand de Cordoué, and of many more. It will be quite sufficient for our purpose to take ordinary children and lads, brought up, as we find them here, who will be ready to say,—

> "Things growing are not ripe until their season;
> So we, being young, till now ripe not to reason."

In the first place, then, it will, perhaps, be granted that what is called worldly wisdom, in which grown-up persons are often such great proficients,—for, as Cæsar said, "Ubi intenderis ingenium valet,"—is not wholly beyond all need of the kind of instruction that young people and even children can supply. If so, we should all look to it; for who knows not that this is where much of the vaunted sense of manhood and age at present is found to end?

It is no wonder, methinks, that the young should dislike the cut of your wise people. "What a pretty thing man is when he goes in his doublet and hose, and leaves off his wit!"

Then, again, there is what might be called the lowering school, which lets down your notions of things scientifically, where nothing but what is tangible is thought worth your money. With all possible admiration for the most brilliant writer of our day, who seems to be the unconscious exponent of this wisdom, I think it may be permitted us to say that children and young persons have some little tiny matter to teach to men who, as a late critic observes, "express the tone of the English governing classes of the day, explicitly maintaining that good means good to eat, good to wear, material commodity; that the glory of modern philosophy is its direction to such fruit, to yield economical inventions, and that its merit is to avoid ideas and morals; who think it the distinctive merit of the Baconian philosophy, that it triumphs over the old Platonic, by its disentangling the intellect from theories of the all-fair and all-good, and pinning it down to the making a better sick-chair or wine-whey for an invalid. That 'solid advantage,' or sensual benefit, is the only good; hiding their scepticism under the cant of practical, and virtually holding that to convince the reason, or to touch the conscience, is romantic pretension."

It is very easy for men like Xenocrates, at seventy-five in-

quiring about wisdom as if they would have much time for using it, to speak of "the narrow prejudices of childhood," a phrase even found with gentle Goldsmith, as occasionally with Socrates himself; but it will not be quite as devoid of all difficulty to dispense, nevertheless, with some of the notions of children, call them what you like, which are the result in them of three great sources of instruction, namely, by your sceptics' leave,—a higher than human light,—a certain inheritance which they possess unconsciously from the poets, philosophers, and historians of antiquity,—and, in fine, from their penny catechism embodying the doctrines of the Bible and the traditions of the Christian Church.

St. Augustin, citing the words, "Lord, the light of thy countenance is imprinted on us," adds, "It is this Divine light which is the only good of man, the only true good*." And Baldesanus says, "Children have sometimes, no doubt, an extraordinary light infused, such as Martin and Nicholas enjoyed, though the common way of their wisdom is by the teaching and examples of others†." "There is in children," as Jamblicus remarks, "a certain notion naturally of the Deity,—'imo tactus quidem divinitatis melior quam notitia.'" "They have," observes the Père Boutauld, "a supernatural wisdom, of which we may say, 'vapor est virtutis Dei, et emanatio est quadam claritatis omnipotentis; candor est lucis æternæ, et speculum sine macula Dei majestatis‡.'" It was a participation in that wisdom which produced those "precious and pure passages of intense feeling and heavenly light holy and undefiled, and glorious with the changeless passion of eternity, that sanctify, with their shadeless peace, the deep and noble conceptions of the early painters of Italy§." You have a living instance in little John. Though but a child, something great, and with a divinity in it, shines out of his eyes, as an old writer says, and encounters yours with a mixture of what he calls the Gorgon or fervent and the alluring. There was no withstanding that tempered darkness, that innermost look. Children, in fact, can teach us by their very countenance "what foolish, weak, miserable beings

* In Ps. iv.
† Stimul. Virt. Adoles. Christianæ.
‡ Sap. vii.
§ Ruskin.

we grown-up people often are in many respects; their very looks, more in sorrow than in anger, will often tell us what no words can *."

"As they sit and gaze upon us
With those deep and tender eyes,
Like the stars, so still and saintlike,
Looking downwards from the skies."

"No doubt," says Gerson, "youths, with all their need of activity, are sometimes much more fit for contemplation than many old men; for there are youths found who, either from natural disposition, or from good education, or by a singular gift of Divine grace, are most quiet and given to devotion; and who can question but that they are more apt to converse with God than many old men †?" Beautiful as are the forms and countenances of children, the charms of their mind can attract men to a contemplation of that superior loveliness; and it is in that fresh and unpolluted spirit that we can, above all, see the justice of what the philosopher said, "Humanus animus, decerptus ex mente divina, cum alio nullo nisi cum ipso Deo, si hoc fas est dictu, comparari potest ‡." In knowledge the young must be, of course, deficient. But what does it matter? Nay, as a great author observes, "in one respect it matters much, and not to the advantage of their elders; for one effect of knowledge is to deaden the original energy of the whole man. Knowledge," he adds, "is at best the pilgrim's burden or the soldier's panoply, often a weariness to them both. Men look back to the days of childhood as of greatest happiness, because those were the days of greatest wonder, greatest simplicity, and most vigorous imagination. And the whole difference between a man of genius and other men is, that the first remains in great part a child, seeing with the large eyes of children, in perpetual wonder, not conscious of much knowledge, but conscious rather of infinite ignorance §."

Then, again, in estimating the wisdom of the young, we should observe how they possess "that synthetic judgment, à

* Dr. Doyle. † De Exercitiis discretis Devotorum Simplicium.
‡ Tuscul. v. § Stones of Venice.

priori, which precedes all experience, and is the necessary condition of all experience, or that which renders experience possible." The young, by their simple acquiescence in the Divine order, avoid the errors of the philosophers. They never suppose, for instance, that their necessary ideas of general, moral, and eternal truths are the conceptions of their own understanding; they take them as having a real foundation in the nature of things; they accept them as their eyes accept and receive the light of the sun, and they accept them as independent of their mind, which knows them,—as binding their intellect and their conscience with as absolute an authority as the conceptions and thoughts of God Himself. How sublime, then, is the young intelligence thus viewed, as responding with simplicity to the faculty of intuition, in which reside the power and dignity of reason! God manifests to them his light, and they receive and reflect it. How wonderful, as great thinkers conclude, is this society of minds with God! How beautiful this participation in Divine truth *!

> "——————— Marvel not
> That Love leans sadly on his bended bow.
> He hath found out the loveliness of mind,
> And he is spoilt for beauty. So 'twill be
> Ever. The glory of the human form
> Is but a perishing thing, and love will droop
> When its brief grace hath faded; but the mind
> Perisheth not †."

The thoughts of the young, which reach beyond a worldling's and a sophist's sphere, are derived also from tradition. Picus of Mirandula, while exposing the vanity of the philosophy of the Gentiles, admits that we can hardly think of any thing true which has not been in part indicated to us by some of the Gentile writers, whose observations seem to have entered into the whole constitution of human thought. As the most learned are obliged to draw from popular sources, so, as Villemain remarks, the most illiterate receive something from antiquity which is every where diffused ‡. Education often appears to impair the

* Brownson. † Willis.

‡ Rapports Académiques, 1848.

judgment of men; but the great primitive truths of moral philosophy come to the young, in an artless way, through language itself without grammatical skill, as well as through a puerile acquaintance with the ancients, whose bequests to humanity can never be entirely withheld from any portion of it. Childhood and youth with candour and simplicity accept these primeval principles and notions, which are transmitted as part of the apanage of the human race; and what can manhood do better than follow them in this respect in accordance with the common sense of Christian antiquity, which never supposed that truth could be opposed to truth, according to the sage notion of those later philosophers whom Leo X. condemned in the Lateran Council, as Picus of Mirandula mentions with such immense satisfaction, adding, as if to express it, that he was himself present at the sitting, and heard the decree promulgated *? The consequence of forsaking puerile notions in this respect is stated plainly enough by Sir Harry Wildair, speaking to Lord Bellamy,—"Look ye," he says, "my lord, when you and I were under the tuition of our governors, and conversed with old Cicero, Livy, Virgil, Plutarch, and the like, why then such a man was a villain, and such a one was a man of honour; but now, that I have known the court, and the beau-monde, and the bel-esprit, I find all this ridiculous, because the world's improved, my lord." He is evidently of Callicles's opinion, that if there should be a man found with sufficient natural power, having shaken off all the trammels of our youth, and broken through, and abandoned, and trampled under foot our written ordinances, and what he terms our quackeries, and incantations, and laws contrary to nature, he would rise up our master, and then natural justice would shine forth †.

St. Augustin observes how much good can be extracted from the Pagans, as Samson found honey in the jaw of the dead lion ‡. Alluding to Cicero he says, "Dixit quidam eloquens, et verum dixit §;" so far was he from thinking that a Gentile could not have delivered truth. Ecclesiastical history teaches us that the mother of St. Fulgentius, "religiosa mater," wished

* Exam. Van. Doct. Gentium.
† Gorgias.
‡ In Ps. lxxx.
§ De Doct. ch. iv.

her son to learn by heart all Homer and a part of Menander. A pedant, who never had meaning in his life, "travelling only for words," might possibly have, what no Christian in his senses would, "his treasure" in pagan literature or tradition, just as he might place it in mathematics or some other sciences, which many saints know nothing of, while they who know them are not saints; and this was the brunt of the accusation brought against St. Jerome in his dream, "Ciceronianus es, non Christianus; ubi enim thesaurus tuus, ibi et cor tuum." The Primitive Church authorized men even to frequent the pagan schools. "It has confidence in their courage," says a modern author. "The day will come when it will be necessary to confess Jesus Christ. These learned men will brave the most cruel tortures without flinching; and not one of them will give the scandal of a culpable weakness or apostasy *." Without reason, therefore, do men at intervals turn from little scholars and puerile studies to reject this ministry of ancient thoughts, working out the purposes of wisdom, which, in the natural progress of early instruction, flows into the young mind, and helps to form it.

But the superiority of the youthful to the worldly intelligence is above all the result of what the former receives with docility from the Christian sources. Men derive from their independence and emancipation from all control, the privilege, if they can call it such, of having these sources partially intercepted in their regard, and even wholly, as far as they are conscious of, taken from them. Not so they of the bower. Either parental, scholastic, or ecclesiastical authority will in most cases secure their enjoyment of them.

St. Augustin says, "A man is wise more or less in proportion as he is more or less proficient in the Holy Scriptures †." So thought also Picus of Mirandula, who, perhaps, knew more about the ancient sages than any scholar at the present day; and never was the truth, and dignity, and superiority of the Bible more clearly and eloquently set forth than in his immortal work against the vanity of the Gentile philosophers. Now,

* L'Abbé Cruice, Hist. de l'Eglise de Rome, &c. p. 89.

† De Doct. C.

childhood and youth have no other notion of moral and religious philosophy but what is in conformity with the Bible, as delivered to them by its living authorized expositors. The ancient University of Paris ordered by its statutes that besides the other exercises of piety, the scholars should recite every day some sentences from the Bible, and especially from the New Testament; and it added these words, "hoc velut divino sale reliqua puerorum studia condientur;" and the parliament which watched over the observance of the statutes enjoined that the students should not pass a day without learning by heart one or two of these sentences, "suivant l'esprit des statuts de la faculté des arts*." The high, spiritual, and majestic themes, as well as the positive and practical doctrines of theology and morals, are all administered to the mind of youth, and that too in such an easy form that childhood can express and retain them,—the unity and trinity of God indicated each time that the sign of Christians is made, the Word, the Paraclete, Providence, necessity of faith, efficacity of sacraments, the fall and justification of man, the necessity of grace, the morals of the Gospel, the authority of the Church,—all that the early doctors require us to know is known to the young.

γνωτὸν δὲ, καὶ ὃς μάλα νήπιός ἐστιν.

When our youth proclaims or denies a thing to be just, it needs no sophist to distinguish what is justice, as when Socrates raised doubts about the correctness of Alcibiades's notions respecting it, when the latter used to appeal to it while playing at marbles with other boys. Romanus, a martyr, speaking in defence of religion, for the sake of corroborating his opinion called a little boy, one of those that run in the streets, and demanded of him publicly respecting the truth of what he had said. The child agreed so perfectly in his answers with the whole doctrine of the Church, that the cruel persecutor ordered him to be put to death †. The difference in this respect, too, when the least, between the emancipated and the enslaved, as some would qualify the mature and the youthful mind, might be described,

* Arrêt du 27 Juin, 1703.

† Bonifacius, Institutio Christiani Pueri.

in Plato's words, as that between true opinions which run away from the souls of men, never abiding a long time with them, and perfect knowledge which arises when those opinions are fastened down as in the children's minds, and made to abide with them *. As a general rule, this instruction still continues every where; and it is not received by parrots. Our John's questions at catechism used often to be so many and so profound that it was necessary to say to him sometimes, "Come, go on, Jack," the needful answer, in fact, not being ready at the moment. Thus daily experience, as observed in the bower, confirms the testimony of the ancient wisdom that, in regard to the order of intelligence, the useful is the ideal; that to find himself whole and entire man must have recourse to God; that to live well upon the earth he ought to extend his vows and his belief beyond it, and that good sense, as well as elevation of soul, has its roots in heaven †.

Whoever, therefore, is disposed to that worldliness and materialism in regard to philosophy, against which the common catechism effectually militates, cannot do better than trace back his steps to the Children's Bower, where he may recover, by means of its spirituality of views, that mental sustenance which constitutes the life of man.

Children, in regard to this source of wisdom, have moreover a great advantage often over grown-up persons in the circumstance arising out of their exemption from interested, though unconscious motives of preference; and the study of this exemption may, therefore, be of immense advantage to the latter. They permit free play to their natural instincts, which have no artificial restraints to prevent their action, or render difficult "an unaffected and unbiassed choice between right and wrong." They can see questions in themselves, instead of being obliged, like many who have long or rough beards, to confound them with their accessories. When they gather flowers 'tis not to serve as badges for a party purpose, as when the white rose and the red were plucked in the Temple garden by those styling each other "Gentle sirs." They know of no angry roses, of no lilies as symbols of a blood-thirsty hate. What child that sees a

* Meno. † Villemain, Rapports Acad. 1854.

flower would think of York or Lancaster, of O'Connell or of Winchelsea? Grown-up people, with the best intentions, but succumbing to the strong necessities of their position, will sometimes care very little for the beauty or the fragrance of the object formed by God, but a great deal for the ends to be promoted by an appeal through it to the passions of a man. To them most questions appear important only in consideration of temporal and strictly local interests attached to them, though wholly foreign to the essential thing involved in them. In England grown-up people contend unconsciously about the worldly interests associated in their minds with subjects of religion, but very seldom about these subjects themselves. What well-informed and thoughtful man, unless a secret conspirator against Christianity, would ever have at heart to maintain the things advocated three hundred years ago by Henry VIII., Cranmer, Elizabeth, and Somerset, which no one out of England cares a straw for in itself, if he put nothing else in the same scale of the balance with them? But there is a vast deal put in with them, and that's what makes the difference; for what these old sovereigns and ministers once on a time quarrelled with has become, to some individuals, in consequence of mere temporal and earthly interests, a thing dangerous to that success in life which every man ought to desire, contrary to their prospects of aggrandizement by wealth, family connexions, and political power which every man may naturally entertain. Therefore such persons never dream about occupying themselves with the foundation of the question, or of trying to find out whether it involves truth and justice in the abstract, but they look on every item of it as constituting only a party badge fit for grounding a war-cry upon when they think that it ought to be raised. What is wise and prudent in their estimation is virtually, though unconsciously, to see what should be thought of it by men who, of all things in the world, dread the result which Callicles so deprecated,—the having "to dwell in an empty house*," to which the study of graceful fooleries, as they say, will lead,—it is to consider what must be done by men who have to make their way or to retain their position in the world, not like boy

* Gorgias.

philosophers to set about inquiring, really with the simplicity of a child, how God looks on it, or how his Church regards it.

Does any one find in sounding his conscience that this or any part of it is true of himself? He should recognize his state as respects wisdom and philosophy. It is simply that of the dead. In the schools of antiquity, supposing that he had ever previously approached subjects of philosophy or religion with the sincerity of youth, his survivors in those domains would have erected a cenotaph inscribed with his name as "quondam philosopho." In the modern world even, an eloquent contemporary regards him in the same light, saying, "Such a soul, though to the eye he still keeps tumbling about in the parliamentary element, and makes motions, and passes bills for aught I know, are we to define him as a living one or as dead? The dog that was drowned last summer, and that floats up and down the Thames with ebb and flood ever since, is it not dead? Alas! you meet here and there such a floating dog; and at length, if you often use the river steamers, get to know him by sight. There he is again, still astir there in his quasi-Stygian element! you dejectedly exclaim, and reflect with a painful oppression on certain completed professors of parliamentary eloquence in modern times. Dead long since, but not resting; daily doing motions in that Westminster region still,—daily from Vauxhall to Blackfriars, and back again, and cannot get away at all. Daily from newspaper or river steamer you may see him at some point of his fated course, hovering in the eddies, stranded in the ooze, or rapidly progressing with flood or ebb, and daily the odour of him is getting more intolerable." Does the person thus morally dead and restless desire to rise from this condition? He should throw away his newspaper or review, and repair to the bower. He should be off to it as quickly as he can; he should sit down with the children; and then, delivered from all political and social pre-occupation, he will be able to see things as they really are presented before him. All sublime subjects, disengaged from what encumbered them, will appear in their just and natural proportions, and he will be able to regard them, not with the eyes of his journalist or reviewer, but as they were seen by the great intelligences of Christendom in every age, from Picus of Mirandula to Bossuet, which were

swayed, not by local passions and narrow interests of one country and of one day, but by their intimate personal conviction, by the general voice of the conscience of mankind, and by the evidences of truth that is for ever.

Again, we may learn from familiarity with this humble and profound school to avoid the influence of those wise men whose philosophy, however spiritual, is opposed to the principles of revealed truth; and, we may sometimes add, whose pernicious opinions, however disguised, are only the more dangerous for the tone of kindness with which they are delivered; "Cum," as St. Ambrose says of these dangerously written books, "gravior sit et magis noxia improbitas benignitatis obumbrata velamine."

> "The view seems happy; some may think it just;
> It may be true, but who shall add, it must?
> To the plain words and sense of sacred writ,
> With all my heart, I reverently submit;
> But where it leaves me doubtful, I'm afraid
> To call conjecture to my reason's aid:
> Thy thoughts, thy ways, great God! are not as mine,
> And to thy mercy I my soul resign *."

"Ne sis sapiens apud temetipsum." Men are for being wiser than authority, than Scripture, than tradition, than the children; and the upshot is, that applying to the latter what Marston's scholar says of his dog, each may say,

> "I was a scholar; seven useful springs
> Did I deflower in quotations
> Of cross'd opinions 'bout the soul of man;
> The more I learnt, the more I learnt to doubt.
> The children slept in peace whilst I baused leaves,
> Toss'd o'er the dunces, pored on the old print
> Of titled words; and still the children slept.
> Whilst I wasted lamp-oil, baited my flesh,
> Shrunk up my veins; and still the children slept.
> And still I held converse with Zabarell,
> Aquinas, Scotus, and the musty saw
> Of antick Donate; still the children slept.
> Still on went I; first, an sit anima,

* Crabbe.

Then, an it were mortal. O hold, hold! at that
They're at brain-buffets, fell by the ears amain
Pell-mell together; still the children slept.
Then, whether 'twere corporeal, local, fix'd,
Ex traduce, but whether't had free will
Or no, hot philosophers
Stood banding factions, all so strongly propp'd,
I stagger'd, knew not which was firmer part,
But thought, quoted, read, observed, and pryed,
Stuff'd noting books; and still the children slept.
At length they waked, and yawn'd; and by yon sky,
For aught I know, they knew as much as I.'

Nor is the case altered when this old learning is given up. The character of the philosophy of the eighteenth century is sometimes said to have been a kind of worship of human reason; but, as De Tocqueville well observes, "it was less human reason that some of these philosophers worshipped than their own particular reason; for never was less confidence shown in the common wisdom of mankind *."

"By reason their own reason's meant,
Or, if you please, their will;
For when this last is discontent,
The first is served but ill †."

Far more than in Johnson's time one might say that "the mental disease of the present generation is impatience of study, contempt of the great masters of ancient wisdom, and a disposition to rely wholly upon unassisted genius and natural sagacity. The wits of these days solve difficulties by sudden irradiations of intelligence, and comprehend long processes of argument by immediate intuition." They wind up their thoughts often, we might say with Overbury, and as often unwind them. Penelope's web thrives faster. Their sayings are very mysterious and hieroglyphical. It is not Religion that "in a lazy cell with empty airy contemplation dwells," though Denham is pleased to say so. It is philosophy which does this now; and with a view

* L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution. † Congreve.

to its results a child might repeat the words of the old play, "I'm sorry to see it; once a man comes to his soliloquies, I give him for gone." The grown world, on the contrary, is inclining to your Turkish opinion in this matter, and does reverence a man whom the vulgar think mad. Men bewilder themselves, and perhaps scandalize their friends, with their metaphysics. How much better to be like children, and take on trust things beyond the sphere of human reason, and which, to say the very least of it, cannot be disproved! It is impossible, some one says, for the mind to conceive a mad Shakspeare, or, he might have added, a mad child. Both have that admirable balance of all the faculties, and that conformity to the natural order, which stops at the frontiers of reason with an O altitudo! which prevents insanity. But how great is the tendency to it of many grown-up people, though with ever so little wit! "Nothing," as a great writer says, "is so hopeless, so intolerable, as the pride of a foolish man who has passed through a process of thinking so as actually to have found something out. He believes there is nothing else to be found out in the universe." "Whenever I consider," says Cardinal Palæotus, "by what arts and snares our first parents were circumvented by the demon, I feel inclined to think that there is no state of life among these professions that are publicly approved of and esteemed, in which there is greater danger or more need of vigilance than that of those who devote themselves to the study of literature and science. It is still the same promise, 'Eritis sicut Dii, scientes bonum et malum *.'" From these perils, at all events, children and youths comtrive to keep themselves in general pretty free; and they certainly lose nothing in regard even to this world from not being authors or readers like so many of their elders, or desiring "to speak ingeniously concerning smoke." Many a man of great talents in the schools of philosophy mistakes wildness of mind for wisdom.

"——————— I have known him
Transported on a sudden into utterance

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* Sermo ad Doctores et in Gymn. Bononiæ Lectores.

Of strange conceptions; kindling into splendour,
His soul reveal'd itself, and he spake so
That we look'd round perplex'd upon each other*."

Speaking of Epicurus and his doctrines, Lactantius says, "Can any one think that that was the voice of a wise man which could most aptly be accommodated to speak the sense of robbers?" There are theories abroad now that might elicit the same question, proving that the greatest of all perils for men is the union of philosophic studies with a bad life, or their action on a heart already corrupted. "Melius est aliquid nescire," says St. Jerome, "quam cum periculo discere."

"——————— The mind
May pine upon its food. In reckless thirst
The scholar sometimes kneels beside the stream
Polluted by the lepers of the mind.
The sceptic, with his doubts of all things good,
And faith in all things evil, has been there;
And, as the stream was mingled, he has strewn
The shore with all bright flowers to tempt the eye,
And sloped the banks down gently for the feet;
And Genius, like a fallen child of light,
Has fill'd the place with magic, and compell'd
Most beautiful creations into forms
And images of licence, and they come
And tempt you with bewildering grace to kneel
And drink of the wild waters; and behind
Stand the strong Passions, pleading to go in,
And the approving world looks silent on;
Till the pleased mind conspires against itself,
And finds a subtle reason why 'tis good
We are deceived, though, even as we drink,
We taste the evil†."

Still we are not the less obdurate. Learn wisdom from children indeed! Pretty maxim for the nineteenth century, when even the state itself comes forward in so many countries on the Continent to found schools expressly for the purpose of counteracting their influence, and of eliminating from the public mind

* Wallenstein. † Willis.

all notions that youth may have been inheriting and deriving from its own inspirations. The generations arrived at maturity are to have few ideas in common with those of the bower. "Nous avons changé tout cela." At least we must give a different turn to all that. "'Tis a pious account," cries our proficient, like my father in Tristam Shandy, "but not philosophical; there is more religion in it than sound science." Meanwhile, with all this sound science, the problem, as an eloquent contemporary observes, "is to guide all classes of men no whither." Can we wonder that children and women, and even the honest governors of prisons, should laugh or feel perplexed at such a project? Can we be surprised if they should even question, like Plato, the advantages of learning, and of a multifarious knowledge which leaves men of no use wherever there is a person skilled in the particular profession for which there may be an occasion at the time? The truth is, philosophize, subtilize, materialize as it may, the world cannot dispense altogether with the notions of youth or, if you will, of childhood, nor can it get on in any manner for any length of time without recurring to them in some shape or other; for, as Cicero says, "Hæc autem in opinione existimare, non in natura posita, dementis est*." Meanwhile, there is no Christian who means to be saved by believing rightly, that can ever believe such impossible passages of grossness as are employed often in the work of uprooting in minds all traces of the bower school. Even Hume admits that common sense is often at variance with philosophy, especially with the sceptical kind; and they who carry the least scruple of mother wit about them will not require to be told that young persons are often wiser than professed philosophers and legislators, who pretend to direct and administer measures for the diffusion of knowledge, which often turn out to be a thing that, as they deliver it, is noxious or absurd; as when the courts of justice are perplexed by the plea of some culprit educated after their fashion, or when the ungracious lad, for all his chopping logic with his mother and sisters, is justly laughed at or pitied by them, when he returns to them from the school, and is told archly that they can find out no rhyme to school but fool, a

* De Legibus i.

babbling rhyme of ominous ending, letting out more than should be known to the public; and that as for his proofs, the word demonstration comes from demon, the father of lies. One cannot wonder if some should resent the being taxed with such proficiency, and say, Why call me a scribbler? Does the parting of my foretop show so thin as if it resembled the two withered tops of Parnassus? Do you see any thing peculiarly whimsical or ill-natured in my face? Is my countenance strained, as if my head were distorted by a strangury of thought? Is there any thing proudly, slovenly, or affectedly careless in my dress? Do my hands look like paper-moths?

So the result is frequently that the state only makes itself ridiculous in the persons of its professors, who are commissioned to contradict the children,—and that it verifies the old remark,

"——— Stolidum genus Æacidarum
Bellipotentes sunt magi quam sapienti potentes *."

Charron would paint pedantry as a woman with a swollen face, and eyebrows knit, reading in a book where is written Yes, No. "The pride of wit and knowledge," says Johnson, "is often mortified by finding that they confer no security against the common errors which mislead the weakest and meanest of mankind." When all is said and done, the result may be soon summed up. "Verba sunt plurima, multamque in disputando habentia vanitatem." To say Ay and No to these particulars, is more than to answer in a catechism.

"So when the darker day of life began,
And you did roam, a thought-bewilder'd man,"

the wisest thing for you to have done would have been to have worked your way quietly back from the philosophers, whether the dogmatists or the sceptics, from the legislators, whether the Whigs or the Tories, to the poor little circle of the children, with whom, in the bower, you would have been calmed to life again. Yes, this is the next point; there you can unlearn

* Ennius.

much and acquire the true wisdom which will constitute your happiness.

Cicero says that the young should be directed by the prudence of their elders, by whose counsel and authority they should do every thing. He seems to have forgotten, or to have never contemplated the kind of opposition schools that we have been speaking of, which were certainly not unknown to his master Plato, any more than to ourselves, and where it is the elders rather who should be advised to do all things, within certain limits, by the counsel and authority of the young; for when resisting sophists there is an air of Divine authority in their sweet faces that will put the company, like so many judges, to the whisper; and that will be sufficient to remind them of that sentence of Ecclesiasticus, "Despise not the thoughts of your child." Indeed, it is part of mere humanity to respect them, as appears from an anecdote found in ecclesiastical history: "Meropius, a Christian philosopher, travelling from Tyre into the remote parts of India, having with him two little boys, whom he instructed in letters and arts, fell into the hands of barbarians in a certain port, by whom the philosopher and several of the ship's company were killed. But the little boys being found sitting under a tree studying their lessons, which they used to repeat daily to their preceptor, their tender age and intense application so moved the barbarous strangers, that they spared them, and led them to their prince, who promoted them to places in his court, to which region one of them was afterwards induced to return as bishop by Athanasius of Alexandria *."

But let us keep in the bower, and observe the superiority of its unpretending wisdom to that which often reigns elsewhere to the bewilderment and detriment of men.

The wisdom of the young, like that of the common people, is that which a poet recommends in these lines:

> "Would you be still more learned than the learn'd?
> Learn well to know how much need not be known,
> And what that knowledge which impairs your sense.

* Ruffin. Eccles. Hist. lib. x. c. 9.

> Our needful knowledge, like our needful food,
> Unhedged, lies open in life's common field,
> And bids all welcome to the vital feast*."

The young resemble Socrates, and they are often wiser than their elders, because they do not fancy they know what they do not know †. The young are not sophists,—"sic enim appellabantur ii qui ostentationis aut quæstus causa philosophabantur ‡." They are not "hunters for wages,—traffickers in the learning of the soul, chapmen in the same articles, and sellers of their own inventions." This is much; for the end and scope of reading is not to know or to be known, but to act better. It is to think, to feel, not to speak; to move the will, not to make money or gain fame by displaying the versatility of an extraordinary degree of intelligence. Children and youths are not like those two princes of Dialecticians, Antipater and Archidemus,—"opiniosissimi homines;" yet dissenting in many things. And this, again, is a great point gained; for how can wisdom grow where minds are self-opinionated? "Laurentius Vallo was a noble grammarian," says Picus of Mirandula, "and a vindicator of the Roman tongue; but when he heard any thing said which he himself had not read, or did not remember to have read, he used to think it was not Latin, though afterwards, they who examined the writings of the ancients more diligently found that what he had rejected as a barbarism was in fact Latin." And so it happens, in regard to higher matters, with those who have not the humility and docility of youth. "The scientific character itself," as Hood says, "is a mark not of the highest, but rather of the lower order of mind; unless it be associated with a breadth of generalization equal to its power of dissection, unless its synthetic be equal to its analytic strength. It is not taking the watch to pieces, but the reverse, that shows the watchmaker." Youth can make nothing of the dreams of philosophers, substituting speculations for religion, assumed realities taken from the senses for faith, nature as they mistake it for revelation as they represent it to themselves. Take and take again, they will say to them, such preposterous discoveries.

* Young. † Plato, Apolog. ‡ Acad. ii.

Children believe in the God of the old catechisms, not in the God of the cloud-compelling sophists, who reduce Him to what they call the soul of the universe. A young and unsophisticated intelligence would never side with Strato, who, as Cicero says, is not to be listened to,—"Qui omnem vim divinam in natura sitam esse censet, quæ caussas gignendi, augendi, minuendi habeat, sed careat omni sensu et figura*." When it is a question of meeting such heroes, the tongues of youths are like the sword that Minerva chose,—

> *βριθὺ, μέγα, στιβαρὸν, τῷ δάμνησι στίχας ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων.*

Perhaps in three hours' chatting with them you can untwist more of the black serpent that has been wound about you than by three years' study. And what a deliverance is this, considering how many coils there are often about grown-up people! Men think that nature for them is all-sufficient; and they say, as if needing nothing else, nothing higher, to give life and meaning to what they may justly praise,—

> "Oh, who could bear to lose the balmy air
> Of summer's breath from all things fresh and fair,
> With all that man admires or loves below;
> All earth and water, wood and vale bestow,
> Where rosy pleasures smile, whence real blessings flow;
> With sight and sound of every kind that lives,
> And crowning all with joy that freedom gives."

But it turns out that this summer's breath and freedom are attended sometimes with results very different from what these lines would lead you to expect; and the reason is, that here below man's happiness consists in hope, and not in possession. Men are not lizards to be made happy by sunshine alone. The Registrar-general's returns have demonstrated that suicides in England, as well as in France, are more common in summer, when nature seems to have exhausted her resources, than in winter, when you are looking forward to the future attainment of them; and they affirm that the idea of the gloomy months

* De Nat. Deor. i. 13.

of November, December, and January being generally the favourite periods for suicide, is unsupported by statistical evidence. M. de Boismont, in his treatise on suicide, says that in Paris the number of these crimes is greater during the summer than in the winter months. Certainly, if nature can do all that is ascribed to her, it ought to be at times when she is most powerful and triumphant. And yet here we find that it is precisely in such seasons that her worshippers, rather than endure her, are obliged to kill themselves. Is not this another instance of what Ruskin remarks, that "It is not good for man to live among what is most beautiful;—that he is a creature incapable of satisfaction by any thing upon earth; and that to allow him habitually to possess, in any kind whatsoever, the utmost that earth can give, is the surest way to cast him into lassitude or discontent * ?"

Again, young people, in general, know instinctively that men have no destiny, that within their hearts lie their greatest enemies, that their depravity is their death, that their passions and their earthliness alone can bind Prometheus to the rock. Has manhood, then, nothing ever to learn from them in all these respects?

But is it not a paradox, some will demand, to ascribe sense and wisdom to children? Why should you think so? Is there no wisdom in heaven, of which kingdom they are representatives? And, besides, view the question as one of your avowed men of sense would do, scientifically. Does not Cicero say, "Quum minime videbamur, tum maxime philosophabamur †?" Children and those who take the views of children verify the proposition. Though seemingly destitute of philosophy, they are really wise. "No reading or study," as Goldsmith says, attending only to one point of the interests of genius, "has contributed to disenchant the fairyland around them." No books of science have endangered their faith by seeking to rest it on a proud and false foundation of assumed knowledge. "Altiora te ne quæsieris, et fortiora te ne scrutatus fueris." Men can learn from children not to seek to reach what is above them, nor to comprehend mysteries which surpass the force of their

* Mod. Painters iv. † De Nat. Deor.

intelligence *. They can learn from them not to want to have all things in regard to mysteries made smooth, and clear, and accounted for, as if they could be scientifically established. "Ne innitaris prudentiæ tuæ"—they might learn from them to start no moral novelties, and still less to make such inventions rules of philosophy and maxims of conduct. The common and inevitable blindness of the proud is to think that they see errors in the doctrine of the Church, and abuses in its government. Impelled by the zeal which this illusion inspires, they undertake to correct these errors. Nothing made by the hand of God seems finished until they have changed something in it, or added some last touches. From children they might learn to conquer such temptations. "Via stulti recta in oculis ejus: qui autem sapiens est, audit consilia." The greatest minds have got wrong in following themselves. Children are an example to them to prove that the most simple have never erred in following the common road appointed to the human race. Men are discontented even with their own guidance. They might learn from children to be intellectually at rest under the protection of an authority which acts like the wings of a mother †.

Moreover, upon the whole, it is evident to common observers, such as ourselves, that children and youth, however looked down upon, have actually all the dispositions which Charron, a very competent exponent, at least, in such matters, enumerates as proper for wisdom. See for yourself if it be not so. They have, first, exemption and enfranchisement from the follies and vices of "the world," and from the delusions of the passions—they are not of the world; secondly, they have universal and full liberty of mind, both in judgment and in will—they have no encumbrances from parties, pedantry, presumption of knowledge; thirdly, they have true and essential prud'hommie—they hate what is evil; fourthly, they have a certain definite end and course of life, as the catechism says, to serve God and be happy; fifthly, they have an aptitude to piety, a love of true piety, captivating their intellect to the obedience of faith, wishing glory to God, and peace to men of good will, a regulation from common domestic discipline of desires and pleasures; sixthly, they have

* Le Père Boutauld, Conseilles de la Sagesse. † Ib.

a certain moderation and rule respecting them, natural, and yet restrained, no excess, but they are placed in a kind of paradise of pleasure, like our first parents; seventhly, they have moderation and equality in prosperity and adversity, making a virtue of necessity; eighthly, they practise obedience to the laws and manners of their country, respecting all just natural authority, and resisting not custom when it does not shock conscience; ninthly, they have a gentle, unaffected behaviour towards every one; tenthly, they are ready for death without fearing it; and, in fine, they possess a true ease and tranquillity of mind:

"Quod sit esse velit nihilque malit *."

Let us only persuade manhood to imitate children in all these respects, and we may use Cicero's words, saying, "Sed iter hujus sermonis quod sit vides, ad respublicas firmandas, et ad stabiliendas vires, sanandos populos omnis nostra pergit oratio †." If all that be not sense and wisdom, at least for one, I do not know what either is; and I would pray thee now, with most petitionary vehemence, to tell me what they are.

But, again, there is another kind of false wisdom common to your grown-up and very respectable-looking people, which they can escape from by submitting themselves to the teaching of the Children's Bower. The spirit of that little school is wholly incompatible, as we have seen, with the sophistical and sceptical philosophy, from which men may escape by flying to it; but we must not conclude from this fact that it has any affinity with that certain apparently antagonistic system of those who "accuse of rationalism whatever is rational," as the Abbé David says, who with anile superstition combat nature, who cling to obsolete opinions and customs, and seem to be enamoured with the desuetudes of older times as such, and praising their own former times as vehemently as if they would sell them. "The Abbé de Coulanges and Mademoiselle de Méri dispute together," says Madame de Sevigné. "It is not that the abbé has any interest in the matter, but when arithmetic is offended, and the rule of two and two making four wounded in any cause, the good abbé is out of himself. It is his humour—you must take

* Martial. † De Legibus i.

him on that footing. She, on the contrary, will maintain any opinion she once supports through thick and thin." This latter is the way of the grave people we are alluding to; and what opinions will they not stand up for! "I, for my part," says Socrates, alluding to something similar, "consider such things as pretty enough, but as the province of a very curious, pains-taking, and not very happy man; and for no other reason than this, that after this he must set us right as to the form of the Hippocentaurs, and then as to that of the Chimæra; besides, there pours in upon him a crowd of similar monsters, Gorgons, and Pegasuses, and other monstrous creatures, incredible in number and absurdity, which, if any one were to endeavour to reconcile each with probability, employing for this purpose a kind of vulgar cleverness, he will stand in need of abundant leisure *." Who stands up for such things now? No one; but we have wonders still of our own fashioning. Grave but most unwise seniors! you think to serve the ancient religion by trying vainly to identify her with whatever is obsolete, ridiculous, cruel, unkind, austere, unnatural, strained, exaggerated, superstitious—portentous things which never came from her, but all of which in turn sought to disfigure her. Hear the plain truth for once: "Her fame lives in the world; her shame in you."

"Do not talk," says St. Augustin, "like those who object to the letter D being found in the name of God and of the devil both. In relation to common affairs, you would laugh at such a man; and I exhort you not to have low and silly sentiments in regard to things Divine and spiritual †." The Père Boutauld reproves such persons indirectly, saying, "It is a thing not a little shameful, that even in the most modest conversations devout persons are spoken of only to accuse them and blame their conduct. Do not increase the number of those who are the cause of this scandal. You will be the cause of it if you try to reconcile devotion with a certain manner of living, at which the tongue of libertines has a right to be diverted, and which the conscience of true saints is obliged to condemn; for liberty, tranquillity, courage, and wisdom ought to enter into your soul with devotion; and a holy father has well said, that

* Phædrus. † In Ps. ciii.

to become really devout is to receive by the benefit of grace what nature had refused us of noble and fine qualities on the day of our birth *."

Learned men and grown-up people who have more zeal than knowledge are apt to fall into exaggerations from which the instinct of youth, if it ever thought about them, would recoil. Baldesanus proceeds so far as to admire and praise things that in themselves would be not only doubtful but absurd, as when he says, "Tanta est hujus virtutis efficacitas ut non modo appetitus a natura insitos coerceat, sed ex ipsa quoque natura posteritatis curam exterminet." This sounds like the language of those men who, when excited a little, rush headlong against even every authority, that they began by respecting in an exaggerated form,—men learned, as St. Augustin says, "who afflict the Church, and cause schisms and heresies †." So speaking of the Church of Rome resisting the exaggerated austerity of the Montanists, a recent author says, "I admire this moderation, so calm, so full of measure and of firmness, which is one of the characters of the primitive Church. It makes Christians accept, as far as possible, the usages and opinions of the society that surrounds them." "Fuyons la folie des extrémités," says Saint-Simon, "qui n'ont d'issue que les abîmes." But such caution is not in accordance with the spirit of your first-rate intelligent men. They are for pushing every thing to an excess. To notice here but one evil result, this intemperance of zeal endangers the very cause that its possessors wish to support. "What deceives men," says St. Augustin, "and prompts them to embrace or to avoid a thing with levity, is the exaggeration of praise or blame bestowed upon it. When they find vices where they thought were only virtues, from having been praised without circumspection, they turn from them in disgust. Be wise and prudent therefore. Use so much discretion and moderation, that whatever is said may conduce to fortify you in true piety. For you know how one praises the Church. 'Christians are all great men. Only Christians deserve to be praised. It is only the Catholic Church that is worthy of commendation; there every

* Les Conseilles de la Sagesse. † In Ps. cxxxiv.

one loves the other tenderly; all is peace and concord.' A man who hears this, and who does not know that there are some bad among these good Christians, comes to the Church attracted by these praises, and finds there these bad of whom he had not heard a word. This wounds him, and the aversion which he feels for false Christians extends to those who are true *." Moreover, these impassioned men, who see so much farther than others, are always for regarding those who do not go the whole length with them in their opinions as adversaries. Thus St. Denis of Alexandria was accused of heresy, and his works submitted to the Pope. If history, as a recent author remarks, had preserved only the accusations against him, perhaps calumny would still be doing its work with regard to him. "Men versed in philosophic and theological studies know how easy it is to put an evil interpretation on opinions which border on delicate and elevated questions †." In this respect, how delightful is it when assisting at any conference, to find that children, or men who retain the simplicity of their wisdom, form the audience! We are at our ease when they are the only listeners; we are not kept on tenter-hooks by the orator for fear lest he should let drop some word to offend the morbidly sensitive; for the young have a healthy, manly way of taking every thing; and, in fact, what is defective and worthless, glides generally over their heads, and makes no impression.

Again, maturity, as it is called, and age, united with a talent and an ardour for distinction, are apt to forget, through precipitation and devotion to one idea, the extension and harmony of human duties. "Being a man," says an old author, "you must live humanly, as well as being a Christian, christianly doing all things that become a man and a Christian, and so fulfilling the objects of your creation ‡." It is, therefore, partly a Christian lesson, when we hear old Homer say,

ἀνέρες ἐστὲ, φίλοι.

Children, as we observed before, have the secret of keeping in

* In Ps. xcix. † Cruice, l'Hist. de l'Eglise, 315.

‡ Adolescens Marians-Academicus.

combination things that ought to mix together, and which it is often the aim of philosophers and other ingenious people to disengage and separate. Children can run to hear the niggers' song in the street, and the next minute they are on their knees at night prayers. They can kiss the friend who is a stranger to their religion, and the next morning pray devoutly for his conversion; they can have faith and humanity, pleasure and piety, truth and indulgence for those who have it not. But the grown-up people I allude to can do nothing of this kind; they transfer to religion and morality their method in pursuing sciences. They neglect the dictates of common sense, through their exclusive devotion to some one idea. "In many sciences," as Dugald Stewart observes, "the loudest advocates for experience are the least entitled to appeal to its authority in favour of their dogmas; and the charge of a presumptuous confidence in human wisdom and foresight, which they urge against others, may, with far greater justice, be retorted on themselves. It is they who are for encouraging a predilection for restraints and checks, and all the other technical combinations of an antiquated policy; while others are inspiring, on the one hand, a distrust of the human powers, when they attempt to embrace in detail interests at once so complicated and so momentous; and, on the other, a religious attention to the designs of nature, as displayed in the general laws which regulate her economy; leading no less irresistibly to a gradual and progressive simplification of things. It is, indeed, the never-failing result of all sound philosophy, to humble more and more the pride of science before that wisdom which is infinite and divine; whereas, the farther we carry our researches into those ages, the usages of which have been credulously regarded as instances of the superiority of unsophisticated good sense over the false refinements of modern arrogance, we are the more struck with the numberless insults offered to the most obvious suggestions of nature and of reason. Thus were the bodies of infants disfigured and distorted; the form of the eye-lids new modelled, the ears lengthened, the feet compressed, and the head itself, the seat of thought and intelligence, subjected to changes of form by mechanical pressures. To allow the human form to attain in perfection its fair proportions, is one of the

latest improvements of civilized society, and the case is perfectly analogous in many sciences."

Men have need, therefore, whatever be their object and standard of perfection, to take counsel of that common sense which is oftener found in young heads still free from the trammels of prejudice, and the wild impulses of fanaticism, than in the minds of elders, who are for sacrificing some one truth or other at every step to the purposes of a single object, and who, in fact, find it humiliating to accept the necessity of receiving all truths. Grown-up persons are often wanting in this sense, which is possessed by the young, though the practical influence of youthful principles extends over these individuals who affect to dispute their authority; while, as a matter of fact, we know that by means of those principles, emanating from intuitive evidence, which, even according to Locke, is necessary at every step to constitute a demonstration, young persons, and those who virtually agree with them, are enabled to form a common and uniform judgment on subjects connected with all the ordinary concerns of life.

For men, therefore, who are entangled in the web of prejudice, or of the eccentricities of genius, and of obsolete, or novel and exclusive opinions, the best thing to do is to break through all boldly by flying to the bower, and, as we advised the sceptics to do, letting the boys carry it away, though it were in an aerie of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of the question. If you follow common sense you will have the suffrages of the beardless, no small testimony let me tell you; for wisdom ever echoes nature's voice. "The wise man," says Overbury, "hides himself with the attire of the vulgar, and in indifferent things is content to be governed by them. He looks according to nature." It is even the object of the foregoing passages to show that sanctity itself, which some would now represent so exclusive and despotic in its judgment, enjoys no dispensation for not hearing what the children and youths have to say; for sanctity is wisdom; and while nothing is more immoderate than the pleasures which are opposed to it, there is not a single thing of more moderation than mind and intellect. St. Augustin, addressing St. Jerome, is obliged to use these words; "Rogo te, si fieri potest ut inter nos quæramus et

disseramus aliquid, quo sine amaritudine discordiæ corda nostra pascantur, fiat!" What need would there have been of such an entreaty in the Children's Bower? You would have had no bitterness of discord there, while they were feeding their hearts, if you had to record

Ὡς οἱ μὲν τοιαῦτα πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀγόρευον.

The joyous spirit of youth, its common sense, its intuitive perception of the universality of things, its familiar acquaintance with what Picus of Mirandula calls "The library of nature," are not to be despised by any class of intelligences that are studious and amorous of wisdom. She may prefer life to books; she may send her best loved pupils to that observation and quiet contemplation of the universe in which the young will read "quasi de bibliotheca naturæ;" and she may not always be displeased with those who run away from books. Of many a child, like little John, it may be said, without alarming her,

"Unknown to him the rigid rule,
The dull restraint, the chiding frown,
The weary torture of the school,
The taming of wild nature down*."

For, after all, as St. Augustin argues, this is so far an approximation to the state where wisdom and happiness are conjoined. "Here," he says, "we are obliged to read books while knowing only in part; but when we shall be in the perfect state, where angels live, we shall have no more need to read any book. There is no reading in the holy Jerusalem. The blessed spirits are there nourished with the Eternal Word †." On the whole, you will find in the wisdom of the bower an analogy with what the genius of the great artist has observed in external nature. "Both are never distinct and never vacant, always mysterious, but always abundant; you always see something, but you never see all ‡."

Let materialists in philosophy, let false spiritualists in the

* Whittier. † In Ps. xciii.

‡ Ruskin, Modern Painters.

same walk, let the prejudiced in favour of what is obsolete or eccentric, let the neglectors of common sense, let even the holiest of men remember this axiom, "Wisdom doth live with children round her knees." Let each, when he feels the evil creeping on, leave the school, the lecture-room, the legislative assembly, the scientific or literary circle, and come to the bower,

> "——————— as he that leaves
> A shallow plash to plunge him in the deep,
> And with satiety seeks to quench his thirst."

So now, wonder who will, you know where wisdom is to be found, and in what company. It is among the smooth chins you will find her, though you were to swear the contrary by all "the thirty thousand effective beards upon the pagan establishment, every beard of which claimed the rights and privileges of being stroken and sworn by." I wish I could think, as Dionyza says, "that you'll turn a child again." I wish I could persuade you to get Medea's kettle and be boiled anew, coming forth like one of the juveniles. You must make one of that company of the bower, at least in spirit, if you would partake of the instructions of wisdom, of her genius, and of her benediction. Come, let's in all as to the very prytaneum of wisdom. "When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give me mine again."

CHAPTER XIX.

ROCKS coloured harmoniously in spots with beautiful lichens, jagged or partly globular masses of dark stone, rising in quaint forms to a region of heathery herbage, with the most delicate green patches of short smooth grass, sloping down and winding between them, used often to receive the little wanderers of the bower, who, indeed, had sometimes works to

carry on there in the way of taking up sand for a sister's pet canary, for sand pits were in the deep hollows. With chins resting on the upper ledge, you saw towards the west a distant horizon bounded by blue hills, beyond which you knew was London, with its millions of souls, so that infinity in the human world, as in the earthly landscape, was there to satisfy you. But after descending and walking a short distance between the hills, the children had to pass a slope of barrenness, shaded with yews and some dark fir-trees, which, with their grey trunks, cast a certain gloom around. No one seemed to care to stop there; and, in truth, there was something of cold horror about the place, even in sunshine, round it, which every one felt. The water that trickled in many clogged brooklets through the dark gnarled stems and roots, was discoloured and ferruginous. All the ground was wrought in stone of iron-coloured grain, like Dante's Malebolge, of which sinister region the whole is formed of this kind of rock. One could not even lower down, where they widened, quench one's thirst at these polluted streams. However, here we are for once, seated near the melancholy boughs, and the impressions will be appropriate to the subject which must occupy us during our present conference.

No one would like to resemble the historian of a neighbouring country, so far as being accused of seeming to assume that the merit of discovering very familiar things is to be ascribed exclusively to himself; but this one may affirm, without affecting superior discernment, that children and young people are very little known in the world we live in. You have of these juveniles that have more in 'em than you'd think. Ay, in a good sense, or go about to think. If you want proof, witness it perhaps in your own astonishment, when you hear announced the object of the present chapter, which is to show that men can learn from them the habit of entertaining at intervals grave thoughts.

The manner in which your sage grown-up people often speak to children is indicative of their own ignorance in regard to what suits the juvenile character, and shows that the "parvulorum dignitas," of which Gerson speaks, is a thing unknown to

them. If they do not begin rudely with the Homeric compliment,

πάϊς ὡς νήπια βάζεις,

they adopt certain diluted, attenuated, affected little words, with less meaning to propitiate as they expect their favour. Without being lions in magnanimity, they will "aggravate their voice so, that they will roar you as gently as any sucking-dove; they will roar you an 'twere any nightingale; they will speak small, they'll speak in a monstrous little voice." But as there is a condescending way of addressing women which they instinctively abhor, so is there a style towards children, for the use of which men think themselves very amiable and vastly clever, while the sly ones are all the while laughing in their sleeves, as if they saw a donkey aping the part of a lap-dog. Children are merry as they ought to be. They may decide for comedies, as Plato says the greater boys are sure to do, leaving wonders for very little children, and tragedies for young men *.

"——— Man's heart is touched with joy
At so much beauty, flushing every hour
Into a fuller beauty."

Well may young hearts join in gladness

"With the glad earth, her springing plants and flowers,
And this soft wind, the herald of the green
Luxuriant summer. They are young like them,
And well may they rejoice †."

But those persons mistake childhood and youth greatly who think that they are without grave thoughts at times, such as might melt manhood, and admonish age to wear with grace and resignation its meet livery.

In the world the great object always seems to be to banish thought that has not for its subject money or politics. In the Children's Bower there is a readiness not alone, as we have already seen, to observe every thing, but also to consider. In the world not alone grave thoughts, but any thoughts—the

* De Leg. ii. † Bryant.

having "ideas," as was said accusingly of the Duc de Saint-Simon—are often deemed unsuitable and unpolite, if not even dangerous as well. So we are presented with one who says,

> "Behold a gentleman!—and that's enough!
> Laugh, if you please—I'll take a pinch of snuff.
> When thoughts arise I always game or drink;
> An English gentleman should never think:
> In us reflection breeds a sober sadness,
> Which always ends in politics or madness *."

Aristotle remarks that "men distinguished in philosophy, political science, poetry, and art, appear to be melancholy †." Childhood and youth are not prepared to go the whole length of this road with them; but they take a few steps along it. It would be idle to invite them in the words of Meleander, saying,

> "If thou canst wake with me, forget to eat,
> Renounce the thought of greatness, tread on fate,
> Sigh out a lamentable tale of things
> Done long ago and ill done, and, when sighs
> Are wearied, piece up what remains behind
> With weeping eyes and hearts that bleed to death,
> Thou shalt be a companion fit for me,
> And we will sit together, like true friends,
> And never be divided."

But you may very judiciously ask them to lie on primrose beds in spring, "emptying their bosoms of their counsel sweet," and I promise you there is often much in them. "It is noticeable," says a living author, "that the early part of our life, our youth and manhood, are frequently spent in the indulgence of a certain grave sentiment: as it is the foliage of summer that makes the deep shade of the arbour and the forest, while winter beams strike through the boughs like keen bright arrows; so the very exuberance of youth creates the pensiveness and the shade ‡." This attribute of early years is as pleasing even as it is suggestive. "The perseverance of the trees of Provence, that

* Epilogue by Garrick. † Problem, sect. XXX.

‡ Hood's Wordsworth.

never change, is," says Madame de Sevigné, "sorrowful and tiresome. It is much better to grow green afresh, than to remain always green. Corbinelli said that God only is unchangeable, and that every other immutability is an imperfection." The truth is as an old writer says: "Human nature is not so miserable as that we should be always melancholy, nor so happy as that we should be always merry. In a word, a man should not live as if there was no God in the world;" though here indeed our author seems somewhat bewildered; "nor, at the same time, as if there were no men in it*." Childhood and youth, at all events, in respect to seriousness and mirth, seem to hit the happy medium; and we may learn from them to aspire to it ourselves, and so effect that "most difficult union," as Cicero calls it, "of gravity with humanity †."

"There's something in a noble boy,
A brave, free-hearted, careless one,
With his uncheck'd, unbidden joy,
His dread of books, and love of fun,
And in his clear and ready smile,
Unshaded by a thought of guile,
And unrepress'd by sadness;"

which delights me, says a poet, who then adds,—

"And yet it is not in his play,
When every trace of thought is lost,
And not when you would call him gay,
That his bright presence thrills me most.
His shout may ring upon the hill,
His voice be echoed in the hall,
His merry laugh like music trill,
And I unheeding hear it all.
But when, amidst the earnest game,
He stops, as if he music heard.
* * *
'Tis then that on his face I look,
His beautiful but thoughtful face,
And, like a long-forgotten book,
Its sweet familiar meaning trace.

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* Spectator. † De Legibus iii.

* * *

'Tis strange how thought upon a child
Will, like a presence, sometimes press,
And, when his pulse is beating wild,
And life itself is in excess,
When foot and hand, and ear and eye,
Are all with ardour straining high,
How in his heart will spring
A feeling, whose mysterious thrall
Is stronger, sweeter, far than all;
And, on its silent wing,
How with the clouds he'll float away,
As wandering and as lost as they*!"

If we proceed to endeavour to analyze these impressions, and to trace the causes of such consideration in a child, we shall find that there is also much to learn from him, and that the same causes should induce manhood and age to participate at intervals in this gravity of early life.

For, in the first place, no one can doubt who watches children, but that the faults of their elders, often any thing but quiet ones, —and how opposed to love and charity are in general their faults! —constitute one very abundant source of this delicate and silent lamentation. Little boots it to the peace of a family, they might often say to each other, like the two brothers described by Sterne, who in so many points resembled children, "that you and I possess ourselves, and sit here silent and unmoved, whilst such a storm is whistling over our heads." When little John beheld a clouded brow, or heard an angry word, or when he suspected that some one he knew did not correspond with duty in every respect, or when he perceived any one moody and discontented, he used to say, as if imparting his own little secret, "Well, our purgatory is here!" Thus

"A shade is sometimes on his brow; but who
Look full upon it feel anon the love
Of his dark eyes run liquid through their souls."

We have seen how children open their joyous hearts to the

* Longfellow.

smiles of nature and of grace. Can we wonder that they should close them again when troubled by seeing in others what Pepys, speaking of his own aunt, calls "these base ugly humours;" or when bound to those who by being unnatural think themselves supernatural; or when they are brought into the presence of the imperfections under any form, to say nothing of the vices of the mature and old? They shrink from them like the leaves of the sensitive plant, and hang their heads. This itself is an admonition. Is there, then, nothing for manhood, with its fierce indifference, to learn from them in that respect?

Again, the calamities of those that children love are often visibly the cause of this disposition. Even in the bower—

> "To each his sufferings; all are men,
> Condemn'd alike to groan;
> The tender for another's pain,
> Th' unfeeling for his own."

Little John was an example. That child, without thinking about it, seemed really to wish, as Essex said of himself, that he could "hold in his heart the sorrows of all his friends." Only hint at them, and "he will weep you an 'twere a child born in April." Shakspeare has an instance.

> "——— To see his nobleness!
> Conceiving the dishonour of his mother,
> He straight declined, droop'd, took it deeply,
> Fasten'd and fix'd the shame on't in himself."

Has the bower no lessons for the hall in regard to such sympathies?

Further, the difficulties of the trials of life forecast their shadow over the young. It would be too soon for them to repeat the complaint of good and holy men in all ages, saying, like that old Bishop of Florence, of himself, with a simplicity almost amusing, "licet curis sæcularibus gravatus ultra placitum *;" but for all that they begin to feel some of the cares belonging to the human existence—some of the "messengers of strong prevailment in unburdened youth." There is no need long to "tell them

* St. Eccles. Florentini Monumenta, tom. i. c. 91.

they are men!" Though the little victims play, it is not true that

> "No sense have they of ills to come,
> Nor care beyond to-day."

Thought, if it has not destroyed, has chequered, be assured, "their paradise." Witness this gay, open-hearted lad, the eldest of the circle in our bower. Well, 'twas a joyous youth, who took you at first sight; and yet he had a stamina of seriousness within him, and there were even moments when you might have said of him,

> "Egregium formâ juvenem * * *
> Sed frons læta parum, et dejecto lumina vultu."

His woe, as Chaucer says, was in a general want of something, and

> "Of such matier made he many layes,
> Songes, compleyntes, roundelets, virelayes."

He had sensitiveness of soul, that "most glorious yet most dangerous gift of heaven," as Frederick Schlegel terms it. There was in his breast an unsatisfied desire, a feverish longing, with a generous but passionate alacrity that could not rest. There was, in consequence, something in the occasional gravity, which he could not conceal, very affecting. "In the last conversation that I ever had with him," writes a holy priest, "he asked me how best a young man, amidst the pursuits and pleasures of life, could keep from evil." Reader, thou wilt sympathize with him! Difficulties, temptations—is the danger never hereditary? —always self-created? It were well, if so, for some. But they will sometimes say, when thinking of them, "Thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart: but it is no matter." One of his great difficulties, however, was to discover how he could remain frank and true, and yet conceal the faults of his young associates from those whom he thought would not be lenient towards them. A purely happy fact to remember is, that he was already beginning to mark, as a lesson for himself, the differences between man and man, place and place, to respect, imitate, and haunt the one, to pity, shun, and avoid the other. His character was evidently changing from gay to

grave; he was already beginning to look at times very thoughtful, to recur to the memory of his days of Greek, and Latin, and philosophy, almost prepared to wish he might recommence them. In fact, three weeks before his death, he said as much. Still, fearful memory! He used to say that the struggles of life in regard to the soul were too much for him, and that he envied those who died well, however young they might depart. And yet, after all, stranger, why do you eye him with such fixed looks? "Love, honour, duty, service, may flow from him, not danger." He is one, however derived, so trained up and fashioned for noble uses, that his youth doth promise certainties, giveth more than hopes. In the mind of his youngest brother these difficulties, of course, assumed a different form; but confront even him they did. With all his inclination to mirth and jollity,

> "His frame of mind was serious and severe
> Beyond his years; his dreams were of great objects."

"What shall I be one day?" he asked his brother, as they sat over the fire; and all remarked that "kingly was his infantine regard." "Indeed," De Quincey says, "it is a common resource of mental activity, and of aspiring energies amongst boys, to fancy themselves kings." At all events, for that once little John said he expected to have the government of a kingdom. The real fact was that he resembled in energy and discretion the petit Jean of the fable; and though he certainly never had to do with an ogre, it was easy to see that he was up to any thing in the way of meeting difficulties and dangers under whatever form they might come to him. Generally nature prompted both him and his brother in simple and low things to prince it much beyond the trick of others. Thus might one have learned from a child to think about the future in regard to one's self. One might smile at the high thought of one so little; but what do not men think when they think in silence and with leisure?

In lightest moments children seem to have an insight into the obligation of labour imposed upon the sons of men. To aid, say philologists, is from the Latin "adjuvare," which is from some obsolete adjective connected with "juvenis," young, and "jovialis," wanton. To aid is to be a young man to another. Amusements, when protracted, tire the young. Recreations alone

suffice not to them. They exemplify the lines of the old poet, describing man,—

> "Quum labor est, requiem; requies, vult esse laborem.
> Sed gravat requies, et gravat omne quod est*."

The young, moreover, have a sense of duty which prompts them to labour. John thus loved to make himself useful, and to work, and assist others in digging the ground, or in any kind of manual labour. It was he who kept the garden, when it was a little one, and cleared it from weeds,—"custos es pauperis horti" we might have said to him like Thyrsis; and then, not content with that, he would sweep the stairs, nail directions on boxes, cord trunks, supply the place of bells as if they had not yet been invented, and do any thing to help the servants. He hated to be idle; he was always at some work or other, though to be sure, when all was done, you might think it no great matter. In fact, he thought no better of it himself, though you might almost fancy that he really understood it as symbolical, and accepted it as such; for after toiling thus, enough, you might think, to make him ache all over, if you stood still to look on, he would stop short, survey the result in silence, and then laugh at it himself. With his eldest brother it was real labour that was sought. He wished to go ἀμ πόνον ἀνδρῶν, he wished to embrace some useful and laborious employment. He desired the post of honour, "which is the post of difficulty, the post of danger,—of death, if the difficulty be not overcome." He wished to give his life manfully. He sought to find "his work a life-purpose." He lamented not having been permitted to find it. He used to say, "I'm tired of this kind of existence." Like the Duc de Saint-Simon, he more than once alluded to the "triste oisiveté de son état†." He listened with pleasure to a friend who suggested some noble distinction to be carried out on high principles of honour and independence. Frank and disinterested by nature, like a boy still in that respect, he could not imagine that a fearless conscientious line of conduct, free from all shackles of party, and sincerely devoted both to religion and to the honour and prosperity of his country, was not

* Herradis Abbatissa Hortus Deliciar. † viii. 176.

a thing that might be realized in Parliament. Hunting, the pleasure of his boyhood, did not long satisfy him. He, too, regarded that kind of sport only as a type of some more real occupation. He even at times would say, like Nisus to his sweet friend,—

> "Aut pugnam, aut aliquid jamdudum invadere magnum,
> Mens agitat mihi, nec placida contenta quiete est."

The truth was, like many other youths of high spirit, he resembled Reinfeld, brother of the Emperor Rodolph, in being stricken "tædio rerum humanarum," and that at the age of twenty. He thirsted after something in his soul, as if, in regard to the need of living water, he was not as insensible as Andron Argivus was to the natural thirst, who, if traversing a Libyan desert, would not have sought for a drink, as Picus of Mirandula tells us. Promise him only recreations, the amusements of Paris, the best introductions to foreign courts,—(just before his death he was invited, by a friend who had loved him from his boyhood, to assist at the coronation of the present Emperor of Russia, under the especial protection of one of his first ministers,)—set before him the prospect of inheriting a competent fortune, of enjoying the pleasures even of the chase with every facility, and he was like Homer's hero,

> ——————— οὐδέ τι θυμὸς
> Ἤθελ' ἔτι ζώειν καὶ ὁρᾶν φάος ἠελίοιο.

Here was suggested a lesson for men, to awaken them; for parents, to remind them of a duty; for the laborious poor, to encourage them; for the rich, to rouse them to a sense of their obligations.

In fine, a source of grave thought at intervals to the young is the indefinite but unmistakable sense which they entertain that we are clad in black mortality, and that the dark curtain of the eternal world must at last drop between us. "Childhood and youth have their secret misgivings," as De Quincey remarks in his chapter on their afflictions *. Their heart is as apprehensive as that of maturest wisdom in relation to any capital wound.

* Autobiograph. Sketches.

Many besides one I must not name have been thinking, year after year, from early boyhood, that youth at least was already finished. With the down yet on their chins, their last hour will seem to have sounded, and they cannot but feel, in regard to that, as born of human kind.

"Between two breaths what crowded mysteries lie,—
The first short gasp, the last and long-drawn sigh!
Like phantoms painted on the magic slide,
Forth from the darkness of the past we glide,
As living shadows for a moment seen
In airy pageant on the eternal screen,
Traced by a ray from one unchanging flame,
Then seek the dust and stillness whence we came *."

These grave thoughts, reflected back to us from the young mind, furnish a great and efficacious lesson to maturity; for that mind of youth never thinks of resisting them as it would an attempt to make it grave by force. These thoughts, expressed in such an artless way, act like the discourse of the Abbé de Montmort, as described by Madame de Sevigné. "He did not scold us," she says; "he did not address us with anger; he only implored us not to fear death, since it is the sole passage by which we have to rise again with Jesus Christ. We granted what he asked. We were all pleased; there was nothing in what he said that shocked us. He was courageous, he was modest, he was sensible, he was devout. I was to the highest degree charmed." Under these impressions the rough-bearded man even seeks to repay his youthful monitor by addressing him in his turn, with the best grace he can, which often is not much, words of encouragement. He will repeat to him at least the lines of a poet, and say,

"Think not the struggle that draws near
Too terrible for man,—nor fear
To meet the foe;
Nor let thy noble spirit grieve
Its life of joyous peace to leave
On earth below.

---

* Holmes.

"A life of youthful bliss and worth
Has no eternity on earth—
'Tis but a name.
And yet its glory far exceeds
That base and sensual life which leads
To want and shame."

Youth hardly needs the admonition. It cries with the same poet, the beauty of whose thought and words it feels in a different way from that of the last speaker,

"O Death, no more, no more delay;
My spirit longs to flee away,
And be at rest;
The will of Heaven my will shall be,—
I bow to the Divine decree,
To God's behest.

"My soul is ready to depart,
No thought rebels, the obedient heart
Breathes forth no sigh;
The wish on earth to linger still
Were vain, where 'tis God's sovereign will
That we shall die*."

It was with such sentiments that René Marie-Albert de Jouenne D'Esgrigny met death in his sixteenth year. A few days before, the happiest of happy boys, surrounded with all whom he loved, he left the world without a complaint, without a murmur, without an expression of regret, just as a year before, our John and Thomas left it, to be ready for him there above, let us hope, and to rejoice with him for ever. Manhood and age can therefore learn from children and youth a practical sense of their mortality; and they need the lesson. "It is persons advanced in years," said a great priest, "who always give us most trouble when they come to die. Young people depart as if they were only leaving one room in the house for another. Yes, just so, one room for another, nothing more †."

* Longfellow.

† Dr. Doyle.

CHAPTER XX.

QUARRY, however small, though it were only like this hollow behind the summit of a chalky bourn, forms a pleasant spot for children. There can be such climbing, and rolling, and scrambling, and dirtying of shoes. It is quite a little Switzerland to them; and if there are only a few plashes of water in the level below, there are the lakes. In fact, to an artistic eye, it really has analogous charms; for whether the scale be small or gigantic, nature has those accidental fractures, and those forms resulting from the fall or unloading of earth which, as I have often felt, and as a great observer lately remarks, "can never be invented, so felicitous are the consequences of her fancy or her fury." Here is a hollow that hardly deserves the name of a quarry, but there are ups and downs in it, and it is screened on one side with a little grove of shrubs, crowning the edge of a bank that separates it from the garden, which is half public and half private, on which declivity the children can recline, with faces towards the evening sun; and the place is so secluded that they like it all the better for being little attractive to others. Alas! I little thought that here was to be their last sitting under the green leaves, gathering the flowers.

Near Mount Alvernia, in Tuscany, there is a summit of the Apennines which has the name of "The Great Sigh," "Planctus Magnus," so called, tradition says, from Totila having been moved to lament the burning of Arezzo and the slaughter in the plain, as he beheld from that height the smoking ruins, and heard the distant cries of the perishing population *. Though we are in the Children's Bower, a great sigh will sometimes reach us; and the ground even here can yield a melancholy seat for us who are still unstruck, as well as it can give later in

* Vital. Chronica Montis Alvernise, 13.

the close adjoining, to those who will be in want of it, a grave. For though some one might think

> "That when they die the tomb may be a bush,
> Where harmless robin dwells with gentle thrush,"

here already stands the consecrated pile ready to receive them, near the verge of the salt flood, if their survivors, scorning

> "Those droplets which from niggard nature fall,"

should wish to make the turbulent surge, that on the unnumbered idle pebbles chafes, weep for aye before their bones.

No one will expect to find the young, or those who learn from them, letting us into a secret like that which Petrarch divulges of himself,—that they are fond of complaining, and that they take pains to have their eyes always full of tears. But here we cannot avoid speaking of the sufferings of the young, and of some few of the lessons which a consideration of them can supply.

> "Lo! what is good of life is but a dream,
> When sorrow is a never-ebbing stream."

Childhood and youth suffer in this life with the whole creation; and they who know not any chastisement, know not their part. The common people, when they see a boy in poverty and hunger smiling and playing in the street, call him, laughing, for all his mirth, a little bunch of misery. They know what he has to endure. The rich find that even their own son has no perfect exemption from the same lot. Seneca says of Augustus, when he lost the two he loved best in the world, Agrippa and Mecænas, "Tot habenti millia hominum duos reparare difficile est." Thus nature knows how to equalize us all in regard to sorrow. M. de Beauchêne, by his recent work entitled "Louis XVII. sa Vie, son Agonie, sa Mort," profoundly interested the public in the sufferings of that royal boy during his long martyrdom; but how common is the phenomenon of virtuous and delicate children enduring lengthened afflictions and complicated disasters! What is most common is sad enough. Henry d'Osseville, in his tenth year, suffered great pains before his death.

He uttered ceaseless and inarticulate cries till his last breath. The writer who tells us this, speaking afterwards of another boy, Francis Privot, says, "Nor can we omit all thought of the humiliations he endured in his last sickness, in which the assistance of others was required, though to the last he would dispense with this through an instinctive regard to the virtue which renders equal the human and angelic nature." Our little John, with all his joyfulness, seems at moments to have suffered, during his short life, mental mystical afflictions, the depth of which were known only to himself. As we have already noticed, when any thing went wrong he suffered; when he heard of others suffering, he suffered with them. As we related, then he used to say, "My purgatory is here." His eldest brother, one of the gayest, lightest hearts that ever animated a noble human form, seems never to have tasted pure joy. It pleased God that some dash of bitterness should be infused into every drop of pleasure that was ever raised to his poor lips. He suffered in body *νοῦσον τε στυγερὴν*, and that no doubt precisely *ἵνα πάθοι ἄλγεα θυμῷ*. He suffered in mind. In his short life there was hardly any kind of personal danger, and even, one might almost say, of humiliation, that he had not to taste of. Consoling thought now!

> "For God has marked each sorrowing day,
> And numbered every secret tear;
> And Heaven's long age of bliss shall pay
> For all his loved one suffered here *."

Let this suffice to establish the fact that youth in general has to suffer. What are the lessons to be drawn from observing it? In the first place, men should learn then to expect suffering, and to be resigned themselves to suffering. We cannot long thank our heart, poor fool, like Beatrice, for keeping on the windy side of care. There is a lee shore that is sure of it at last. Suffering is the common lot of our nature; and this can be explained only by the great mystical principles that we examined in a former chapter, so that we learn now by these last observations to feel more than ever their certainty and their im-

* Bryant.

portance. The Pope St. Gregory the Great says of his own sorrows, "Mœror quem quotidie potior, et semper mihi per usum vetus est, et semper per augmentum novus." So it is more or less with every man, "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me." "So far," adds St. Augustin, "you have the will of the man represented, while you have also the right heart in what follows, 'Nevertheless, not mine, but thine be done.'" St. Ambrose, in a spirit of humanity that not a few would now disparage as something romantic, compared our life to the rose, adding, "Vallata est enim elegantia vitæ nostræ et quibusdam sollicitudinibus obsepta, ut tristitia adjuncta sit gratiæ." But let us again hear St. Augustine. "Universum stratum ejus versasti in infirmitate ejus*." "By bed," says the holy commentator, "we understand something terrestrial. Every soul that is weak seeks in this world something terrestrial, where it can repose, because it cannot without difficulty suffer the labour of a continual application, and of a spirit always bent to think on God; it seeks therefore on earth something on which it can repose, and, as it were, lie down, in order to take some rest; and such are the things that the most innocent can love, for I do not speak of the detestable passions of the wicked, of which many seek the repose; but let us put aside such things, and come to what an innocent and just man does. He finds his repose in his house, in his family, in his wife and children, in his little property, in his little estate, in his little field that he has planted with his own hands, in a little building that he has caused to be made. Just persons find their repose in all these things; but God sometimes mixes all this with bitterness, for fear that the traveller should mistake his hostel for his own house, and forget to proceed towards his country †."

In fine, if not before, at least in our decline, we all of us having generally to suffer, will need this bower lesson; and, as Homer says, heaven itself cannot to its dearest friend render possible an escape from this necessity.

> Ἀλλ' ἤτοι θάνατον μὲν ἀμοῦσαι οὐδὲ θεοὶ περ
> Καὶ φίλῳ ἀνδρὶ δόσαντες ἀλευάμεν· ἐκτὸς ἐὼν δὴ
> Μοῖρ' ὀλοὴ καθέλῃσι ταναηλεγέος θανάτοιο.

* Ps. xl. † In Ps. xl.

Christians, it is true, would modify such expressions. They explain the deliverance of the just by referring, with St. Augustin, to the prince of the apostles, and to what he suffered. "Our Lord," he says, "delivered St. Peter from prison. Had St. Peter ceased to be just when He did not deliver him from the cross? Did not He deliver him then? Yes, He did deliver him; for it was then a deliverance from all miseries. How many evils did he suffer after being delivered from prison by the angel! Whereas, from the cross, he passed to a place where he was to suffer no more *."

But if suffering be thus inevitable, is it not an important lesson which can be learned from observing how the young endure it? For how few come up to them in that respect! All that the wisdom of the proud can teach under misfortunes is to be stubborn or sullen, or aggressive with all the artillery of cant. The children's sweet example can prove how possible it is to retain, under such circumstances, without envy or affectation, a contented mind. "I maintain," says Baldesanus, "that real strength of mind, religion, counsel, and greatness of soul belong to this period of life. Men are often subdued by a light misfortune, but boys are invincible. Refer even to slight occasions. Observe how they even love the cruel teachers who so barbarously treat them." They bear, in fact, whatever is disagreeable with even a smiling countenance, turning it to a jest perhaps, and only saying merrily, like Falstaff in battle, "Would it were bed-time, and all well."

But there is another lesson here, which in its deductions will not prove quite so agreeable for some of us. Children suffer, that is, the innocent, the just suffer. Then men of mature age, often so far removed from their category, should be not only reconciled, but rejoiced, from mystical considerations, to suffer with them. Invisible are the rewards of a man, who says, "We rejoice in afflictions." They are not the less real though. "Grandeur, happiness, all," says the Père de Neuville, "depend on having loved the cross of Jesus Christ. Birth, credit, riches, piety even, all will be worthless, unless marked with the seal of the cross; all virtue that will not have been brought low by

* In Ps. xxxiii.

the humility of the cross, purified by the experience of the cross, ennobled by the love of the cross, will be vain for heaven." Such language seems strange to us, perhaps. Of course, nothing can be fully explained; but, if sufferings were not necessary to answer the ends of ultimate felicity, we may be sure that children would have possessed an exemption from them. It is well, therefore, to share with them in what nature, as at present constituted, seems ordained to offer to their pure lips. We had best bow down with simplicity, like children, without seeking to comprehend the particular reasons that may exist in our own case, which render suffering necessary, and say with our little John, "It can't be helped." We can't do better than observe how the young suffer, and then, supplicating God's help, try to suffer like them.

"Would you know," asks St. Augustin, "if you have a right heart, that God may be sweet to you? See if God pleaseth you in the good that you do, and if his conduct do not displease you in the evils that you suffer. Beware of murmuring. You say, 'I know I am a sinner, but not so bad as such a one, who is so prosperous while I am in adversity.' This is to commit your soul. For what say you? 'I admit I am a sinner, but I have not merited such treatment.' So you don't say to God, 'I am just, and you are unjust; but I am unjust, and you are still more so.' But this is to war against God; and oh, on what unequal terms! He is infinitely more powerful than you. The greater the stones you throw against heaven, the more will they crush you when falling on your head*." A child never murmurs, never tries to hurl stones against heaven, never contrasts himself with others to claim an exemption from the sorrows of life. The wisest and the happiest thing for a man to do, is to copy him, and transfer that type to his own conduct. But there is more than this to learn and digest from observing what the young are called to endure.

"All the sufferings of Christ were," says St. Augustin, "accomplished in the head; but his sufferings in the body are not yet perfect, for Christians are the body of Jesus Christ. St. Paul, as one of them, can therefore accomplish what is

* In Ps. lxx.

wanting in them. He suffered when He said, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' He is still poor, and a stranger, and sick, and in prison *." He is still, we may add, a youth and a child.

We see but in part; we see but fragments. Heaven! thy great pleasure must not be argued. Innocence made to bear what seems to blind mortality the doom of guilt, "how the instinct of man," exclaims a modern author, "turns to that picture! There ran along the Greek mind that idea which has been woven into the moral constitution of our globe, that innocence can expiate, that guilt has no power to sacrifice for itself, and that only from the unoffending can the pure flame of expiatory sacrifice mount up."

Walk aside with me; here's one has studied eight or nine wise words to speak to us, which these signiors must not hear. He has nourished strange thoughts, which most men would willingly discard. What they are, judge for yourself. He does not invite you to an oracular head. He offers no proof. Perhaps "there's no such thing, and 'tis only one of those odd tricks which sorrow shoots out of the mind."

"There seems, however," he says, "reason to believe from history that since, as Pittacus said, 'it is difficult to continue to be good,' young people often suffer—die even sometimes on account of others,—for the punishment or the direction, and for the good of others, and, of course, ultimately, for their own greater felicity. You understand me," he adds, "let those who love them, then, learn from what is observed in the traditions of the bower to take especial heed, lest at any time their internal monitor, like the domestic god reproved by Elijah, should be either talking, or pursuing, or be on a journey, or peradventure be asleep, so that he cannot be awoke;" for, in that event, however incomprehensible to us, the result of their perplexities, to speak gently of them, and, as history itself indicates, may be a verification in one sense of old Homer's words,

——οὐ δηναιὸς ὃς ἀθανάτοισι μάχηται,
οὐδέ τί μιν παῖδες ποτὶ γούνασι παππάζουσιν,
ἐλθόντ' ἐκ πολέμοιο.

* In Ps. lxxxvi.

These sons we read about in old poems, legends, histories,—who are described in the beginning, in their school-time, as writing to their own fathers, and, literally, even papaing them in Greek letters out of frolic,—where are they at the next page? "Hector ubi est?" Let us go back together to the company, and in pity to them, still your fingers on your lips, I pray.

No doubt the despondent, who are a-weary of the disasters of this life, who humble themselves despairingly, and give themselves up to discussion, like those who are sea-sick, to be trampled on, and treated as any one pleases, will sometimes franticly square their talk. They have words "that would be howl'd out in the desert air, where hearing should not catch them." They have to guard against the thought that perpetual sober Heaven must be taking revenge, in the way of mortal enemies, upon themselves; and no less to be warned against an immediate and undoubting application to their own case of the sublime Platonic doctrine, which teaches that suffering, as a means of deliverance from evil, is a gift of mercy, and that not to suffer may be for some the greatest and chief of all calamities *. Still, many, "in order to honour their own souls," as Plato says, by not deeming themselves exempt from blame, will interpret in one or other of these ways what may befall them; they have so much to accuse themselves of! Even without finding that they are identified with hateful images in others' minds, even without supposing that all their faults are observed, set in a note-book, learned and conned by rote, to cast into their teeth; still there is nothing sad, of which they are not at times disposed to think themselves, in accordance with some dispensation or other, the cause. A goodly humour, is it not, my lords? Well, it may be right to modify, but perhaps, after all, not quite to let pass as idle wind or mere chimeras such thoughts and such misgivings. It is certainly a lesson for all ears, that in the sufferings of childhood and youth there is a mystery, that no mere materialist will ever be able to see through. Men who observe them, however, from the Christian point of view, may draw this conclusion, that their fate, however lamentable or premature to the eyes of flesh and blood,

* Gorgias.

may have been necessary to secure their own happiness, and to obtain for others, though the least deserving, a participation in the felicity which they, as innocents, are taken away to enjoy, and surely the sooner the better, in another world. Bitter anguish for others may be a provision of goodness for their future lot.

Yes, from these sufferings of early life men can learn in part what must be the perilous effect of circumstance, involving others, perhaps, through their own rashness a long long while ago, which sometimes may be the invisible cause from which, in mercy and in fulfilment of a Divine economy, they originate.

Would you hear the very words that, with a view to this spiritual and unseen cause, the judgment, at least, when nervously and feverishly excited by the dark views of others, for minds once struck are prone to such thoughts, may be thought to extort on occasions of this kind? You can find them where the unhappy chieftain, in Macbeth, hears of his children's fate, and says,

> "I cannot but remember such things were
> That were most precious to me. Did heaven look on,
> And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,
> They were all struck for thee! naught that I am,
> Not for their own demerits, but for mine,
> Fell slaughter on their souls."

How can you prove a negative when events and impressions are of this kind? You have the same thought in another poet,

> "——————————— For me
> There fell the dearest friend; and through my fault
> He fell! No joy from favourable fortune
> Can overweigh the anguish of this stroke.
> The bitterness of mortality is glutted;
> Life pays for life. On this pure head the lightning
> Was drawn off which would else have shatter'd me."

That such suggestions are wholly fanciful, many will be slow to believe. Even the instinct of the young seems to agree with these misgivings of their elders. They speak at these times like John of Gaunt, saying,

"Though Richard my life's counsel would not hear,
My death's sad tale may yet undeaf his ear.
Oh, would the scandal vanish with my life,
How happy, then, were my ensuing death!"

They even offer the sacrifice of their life with this intention, saying, like Plantagenet, "Oh, would some part of my young years might but redeem the passage of your age!"

There are examples in history, that seem to show that fortune will appear to quarrel with some for the sake of others; that some will seem to derive unhappiness from others, like an hereditary ill disease; and that some have not the right to think themselves undeserving of what happens to them, since possibly they might with truth say rather to those departed, "Funeri, heu! tibi causa fui." The Emperor Maurice having caused the massacre of many of his subjects, whom he could have ransomed from captivity at a small cost, besought God to punish him in this life, and he wrote to ask similar prayers from all the patriarchs and monks of the East. His prayer, say historians, was granted, for he saw all his own children put to death before his eyes, while he said only "Justus es, Domine, et rectum judicium tuum." Similarly, in France, a father in recent times concludes the account of the death of his son of ten years, named Eugène, saying, "May the affliction which overwhelms me prove profitable to my salvation. Pray to God that I may persevere in the holy resolutions which I have made for the remainder of my life *." "To some no way may be left," as Rollo says, "ever to hope for an entrance to the blessed Paradise, but by swimming thither in these tears." And, in fact, the consequences produced by such deaths are often visible and permanent. We are told that Gustave de Burelet did as much good to his former fellow-collegians at St. Acheul, by his death, as a devotional retreat could have produced amongst them. "We see every day," says Gerson, "some who give themselves to God with their whole heart, and despise the world on account of occasions of this kind, who before would not give a penny for God's sake; and when they themselves come to die, then is their consolation

* Souvenirs de St. Acheul.

manifest. It is to be believed," he adds, "that many children die thus for the utility of others: sed unusquisque adeo amori hujus mundi est immersus, quod illud considerare nequit*." That the circumstances in which thoughtless, frail, unhappy men are sometimes involved, may be the cause of events which seem unconnected with them, is no doubt possible, if not probable. It may be for this reason that

> "The canker galls the infants of the spring,
> Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd."

Many an unfortunate self-tormented wanderer, not to say equivocator, might believe to his own ears addressed the piercing words of Minerva to Ulysses—

> Τίπτ' αὖτ' ἐγρήσσεις, πάντων πέρι κάμμορε φωτῶν;
> Οἶκος μέν τοι ὅδ' ἐστὶ, γυνὴ δέ τοι ἤδ' ἐνὶ οἴκῳ,
> Καὶ πάϊς, οἷόν που τις ἐέλδεται ἔμμεναι υἷα;

Poets represent before us such a victim, feeling at intervals this arrow in his soul, and saying of his little son,

> "————How he glisters
> Through my rust! and how his piety
> Does my deeds make the blacker!"

And when the sacrifice has been consummated, come moments, they tell us, of deep anguish, when to himself he cries,

> "But, oh! do not repent these things; for
> They are heavier than all thy woes can stir."

"Let not the mockery of fortune," he continues, "more cruel often in her honours than in her disgraces, follow me even beyond death. Not for my bones her monument, but

> "A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,
> For us—a shrouding sheet;
> Oh! a pit of clay for to be made
> For such a guest is meet."

Whatever may be thought of such representations by poets,

* Sermo de Consolatione Mortis Parentum.

those are great lessons of which Parnell, following Guy Le Roi, in his Doctrinal de Sapience, gives a version that is known to all of us—

> "Yes, taught by these, confess the Almighty just,
> And, where you can't unriddle, learn to trust!"

True, perhaps, there's no such thing as this dagger, which the diseased mind contemplates. It may be a false creation, proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain. All these events may have taken place from natural causes; and though you do ascribe them to yourself, might, had you ne'er been, have happened. But it may also have been otherwise. For take an hypothesis that can be of use to help us further in such grave considerations. May not the child have been called away through views of Providence respecting others as well as himself? as when we read, "And God, to save the father, took the son." Zedekiah, surrounded with a numerous family, doubted not that his race would possess for ages the sceptre of Judah; but no! "in memetipso juravi, dicit Dominus, quin in solitudinem erit domus hæc." "Unfortunate man," exclaims De Neuville, "it is you, it is your insolence, your vanity, your profane life, which has cut the stem of your child's days; you took, or would have taken him from the grace of God; he has taken him from your tenderness,—in solitudinem erit domus hæc."

Nevertheless, still keeping in view our hypothesis, we are told that there is a lesson to be drawn, even by such a survivor, from these sufferings and deaths of children:

Ἄλλο δέ τοι ἐρέω, σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῇσι.

It is the lesson of repentance, as Parnell shows it practised, when

> "The poor fond mourner humbled in the dust,
> Now owns, in tears, the punishment was just."

To this complexion, however secretly, many have to come at last—not as men, perhaps, who had been possessed by an evil will, an impious intention; but as those who had failed, through human frailty, as dust and ashes.

> "Sensibus hæc imis, res et non parva reponas."

The very name of man in sacred Scripture, is used sometimes to express fatuity, as in the words "suavis est homini panis mendacii *." At all events, one cannot read the old chronicles without perceiving that some men in every generation seem to have been fortune's fools; and that, perhaps, the very best thing for them was, the provision for a triumph of rhetoric against them—the impossibility of their excuses being made known to men—of their whole story being told, and of providing salves for the wounded name that lives behind them, in consequence of things standing thus unknown, and of there being no hiding of those naked frailties that suffer in exposure —suffering, and even shame, being the only means of escape left to them according to the view of Socrates, from the greatest of all evils, which would be impunity. It is allowable to believe that sore perplexities, bitter consequences, and exquisite disappointments, if you can let pass such an application of terms, will be counted for something in the next life. Considering such cases hypothetically, we can conceive some persons who love without the fear that love inspires; some who may have wantonly mixed love with every thing, presenting or suggesting to eyes that sought its source only a poor brooklet; some who may have yielded to the attractiveness of a kind of ideal world, against which some of the wise and good are more inclined to set their faces sternly, as if thinking that for it the heavens, taking angry note, will often leave men comfortless. Death comes suddenly and takes from such men the object that they doated on, some one that they felt their life bound up with, that was part of themselves, or rather, ten thousand times ten thousand more than themselves. Well, tenderness and affection thus wounded, now constitute their needful discipline; the road of pleasure is stopped; and with love they may think all things finished for themselves. But still the realities of life must be faced; and who knows? The incision may have already brought back a sense that had grown torpid. Well, you can conceive that there may be another devious road left open to them—that of ambition. We can imagine them turning to some one else, and addressing heaven in the words, "Our

* S. Melit. Clavis De Homine.

destruction is not decreed, since there remains to us such another." We can conceive them expecting to see the name of their family transmitted by the heir of their own faith as well as form. We must admit the possibility of its being in providential counsels that pride and arrogant wishes should be checked. Death returns, and sharp physic is this last. Then is snatched away the prop they gloried in, the observed of all observers, that might have been a column mainly supporting a now half-demolished house.

> "Weak influence of nature! what fair ye frame
> Falls in the prime, and passeth like a dream."

So ambition's debt is paid. Afflicted in their pride, that road is closed now as was the path of love before. Yesterday they were as trees whose boughs did bend with fruit; now, a storm has shaken down their hangings, nay, their leaves, and left them bare to weather. With life itself left to them as a charge, such survivors must be weary of a fort that cannot long hold, dismantled, mined, all defences by such sorrows battered. One can scarcely conceive any thing else remaining for them, but to try, at least secretly, the escape to heaven.

> "Restat iter cœlo: cœlo tentabimus ire."

The skies are open, let them try the skies. If all this be a mere hypothesis, still there is a good moral in it, while giving continuity to facts that might not be so easily explained without it; but, indeed, all this is possible. It is even probable that such things happen, and that events can often be traced and combined in some such way. One may not be able in every instance, of course, to give the names, like Hamlet, but there are stories that prove it to be possible, "extant and written," as we might say, "in very choice Italian." Let us rest a moment; 'twill be the last scene now.

CHAPTER XXI.

HERE'S no Arcadian school to-day, reader! There's no sitting in a bower. There's no one to select or describe a sweet spot beneath the branches. The ash is in the woods, the pine-tree in the garden, the poplar waves its branches over the water, the fir casts round a grateful shade—but the children!—they are not there to notice them. They are within doors. The groves are silent, the fields deserted, the flowers seem to hang their heads. And within doors? Ah! there is fear, and breathless running to and fro, and hurrying from room to room; and there are sleepless nights and agonizing dawns, and days spent between hope and a kind of despair; and no one leaves the house but to convey some anxious message trembling and agitated; and all is changed.

Reader, while we meet thus, many elsewhere are chiding the hasty-footed time for parting them. It is a common cross. Every bright thing in this world, as every serene hour, has an end for which few have long to wait, and the Children's Bower enjoys no exemption. It will often fall to ruin suddenly, and present a great contrast to the felicity of its first years. 'Tis all our joys of earth that old Time, as he passes by, takes with him. The day of separation comes—the day which deserves Homer's appellation of *δείελον ἦμαρ*.

> "So added days of life bring nothing new,
> But, like a sieve, let every pleasure through;
> Some joys still lost, as each vain year runs o'er,
> And all we gain, some pensive notion more*."

As a conclusion of this book, we shall soon have to observe one form of this mutability affecting the bower, a form, indeed, so common, that it is represented on the capital of one of the great columns supporting the lower story of the ducal palace of

* Pope.

Venice, where it is actually made to enter into the history of marriage there represented,—the lover being shown first seeing his mistress at a window, then addressing her, bringing her presents, then the bridal taking place, then the birth, and then —and then, the death of a child *. And if the noblest men in Venice, who "habitually walked beneath the shadow of that great arcade at the time of their first meeting each other for morning converse," could find a lesson useful to themselves in such a general representation by the old sculptor of the sorrows incident to the happiest condition of human life, I am slow to believe that the kind men of our age will disdain the same sorrows, merely because they are presented to them as having been endured by one obscure contemporary—a stranger.

The closing scene, in this instance, will, therefore, lead us back to an event of which the consequences formed a prelude to the whole book. A second event, like that first sad change, and even in the opening page anticipated, will have also to be related now at length; for

> "The circle is broken—two seats are forsaken—
> Two buds from the tree of our friendship are shaken;
> Two hearts from among us no longer shall thrill
> With joy in our gladness, or grief in our ill †."

There is no Children's Bower that has not felt or, at least, heard of such mutations. We must be patient, and endure what others endure. Bear with me while still, as usual, not daring to trust my own wings for any lengthened space, I only, like a half-fledged bird, skip from bough to bough, from one fragment of some one else's genius to another. Yes,

> "There is no flock, however watched and tended,
> But one dead lamb is there!
> There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
> But has one vacant chair!
> The air is full of farewells to the dying
> And mournings for the dead;
> The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
> Will not be comforted!

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* Stones of Venice. † Whittier.

Let us be patient! these severe afflictions
Not from the ground arise,
But oftentimes celestial benedictions
Assume this dark disguise.
We see but dimly through the mists and vapours;
Amid these earthly damps,
What seem to us but sad funereal tapers,
May be heaven's distant lamps.
He is not dead,—the child of our affection,—
But gone unto that school
Where he no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ Himself doth rule.
In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
He lives, whom we call dead.
Day after day we think what he is doing,
In those bright realms of air;
Year after year his tender steps pursuing,
Behold him grown more fair.
Thus do we walk with him, and keep unbroken
The bond which nature gives,
Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken,
May reach him where he lives *."

Cicero experienced what it is to have the circle in the bower broken up, and he speaks of it thus: "In this ruin of the republic I had no inclination to the Forum, nor could I bear the sight of the senate; but I had still, in Tullia, somewhat always to recur to, in which I could acquiesce, and in whose sweet conversation I could drop all my cares and troubles: but by this last cruel wound, all the rest, which seemed to be healed, are broken out again afresh; for as I then could relieve the uneasiness which the republic gave me by what I found at home, so I cannot now, in the affliction which I feel at home, find any remedy abroad, but am driven as well from my house as the Forum; since neither can my house ease my public grief, nor the public my domestic one †." Madame de Sevigné knew what

* Longfellow.

† Ep. Fam. iv. 6, ad Att. xii. 38.

it was to see a vacant place. "There is no spot in this house," she says, "that does not wound my heart. The window through which I saw you mount into the carriage, this closet where I gave you my last embraces, these capuchins, where, with you at my side, I used to hear mass, all move me to such a state, that I am an object of pity." She only has to regret the absence of her daughter in Provence. "I am writing to you," she says in another letter, "at the end of this little sombre avenue that you loved, on that moss seat where I have seen you reposing. But where have I not seen you here? There is no spot, either in the house or in the church, in the fields or in the garden, that does not remind me of you. I fancy I see you present; I think of every thing, but all the while you are two hundred leagues distant from me, and then I weep without being able to stop my tears. Can one see again these walks, these inscriptions, this little cabinet, these books, this room, without dying with sorrow? There are agreeable remembrances, but there are also others, so keen and so tender, that one can hardly endure them. Of this number are these that I possess of you." Evelyn felt what it was to see vacant places in the bower; and after describing the death of his dear son Richard, at the age of five years, adds these words in his diary: "Here ends the joy of my life, and for which I go ever mourning to the grave." Writing to Sir Richard Browne, he even says, "The stroke is so severe, that I find nothing in all philosophy capable to allay the impression of it, beyond that of telling it to friends." The virtuous Duc and Duchesse de Beauvilliers experienced the same misfortune. Their two sons, of sixteen and seventeen years of age, were carried off by small-pox in the November and December of 1705. Overwhelmed with grief at the death of the youngest, they immediately went to mass and communion, to make it their offering at the altar; and when his brother died, with the same affliction, they showed the same faith and the same piety. "I know of no sermon," says the Duc de Saint-Simon, "so affecting as the grief and resignation of both parents. After the first days, I tried gently to turn off the conversation from the one subject; but the duke, thanking me for my good intention, begged of me, as one of the few persons to whom he

could speak of his children, to suffer him to talk about them, as it consoled him, and that he felt the need of such conversation *." It is often, however, obscure unknown persons, like Wordsworth's leech-gatherer, who have, in this respect, to witness greatest desolation. "It had pleased God," that poor father said to him, "to bless him with ten children; all these were dead but one, a sailor, of whom he had not heard for many years."

To the last, we shall find that men can learn from the Children's Bower important lessons; but as the details respecting its sudden and violent end in one particular instance will themselves be audibly suggestive and instructive, I shall merely relate them, and leave the reader henceforth to observe for himself the conclusions to be drawn, without feeling bound any longer to point them out for him at every turn as they are presented.

There comes, then, sometimes a stern visitor to the Children's Bower, who seems to have no right by nature to enter it, death —and death in summer, too, as if to verify the truth of what De Quincey says, that death is more profoundly affecting in summer than in other parts of the year—so far, at least, as it is liable to any modification at all from accidents of scenery or season; the reason, he thinks, consisting in the antagonism between the tropical redundancy of life in summer and the frozen sterilities of the grave. Nevertheless, as we already remarked, one cannot say that this visitor comes wholly unexpected; and we must pause to notice a certain mysterious phenomenon that is frequently observable where young persons congregate.

"It is an ancient opinion," says Cicero, "come down to us from the heroic times, and confirmed by the consent of all nations, that there is a certain divination among men, that is, a presentiment and knowledge of future things †." "There is," he says elsewhere, "inherent in minds, I know not how, a certain presentiment of the future, which is most apparent in the greatest and loftiest minds ‡." And perhaps there are sufficient

* Mém. tom. v. 76. † Cicero, de Divinatione.
‡ Tuscul. i.

facts, as we lately remarked, to justify our including in the number of such minds those of children and the young.

> "By a Divine instinct men's minds mistrust
> Ensuing danger; as, by proof, we see
> The water swell before a boist'rous storm."

Philosophers, in modern times, have expressed a belief, in accordance with what we read in the Timæus of Plato*, that such foreknowledge belongs to the soul of man as having been made after God's image, and that it is only a natural attribute of our human nature†. Be that as it may, there are very singular facts, instances of "hearts' presages," as Bagot calls them, which seem to warrant the opinion. I know one who heard words like those of Juliet: "O God! I have an ill-divining soul—I have a faint, cold fear thrills through my veins;" and, ere a week had elapsed, the event was tragical enough, I promise you. At all events, the child or the youth whose departure from mortality is near seems often to foresee, in a most wonderful and mysterious manner, his own approaching change. By his looks and tone it will seem as if he had already beheld a different life from ours. Sometimes he will speak of what he foresees. There are many instances. Hyacinthe Lecudon had a presentiment of his death. He made no mystery of it to his friends, but said openly that he knew he was to die before the vacation. His joy seemed supernatural when to one of his most intimate fellow-students he said, when taking a walk with him one day, that he knew he had not three months to live; which assurance of his was verified‡. Henry d'Osseville, aged ten years, had a presentiment of his death four months before it arrived. He said at play to one of his companions, "Let me take your place. You'll have more time to play than I shall have." He said repeatedly, "I shall die this year§." These narratives are borne out by what many persons

* xlvii.

† Sir George Mackenzie, the Virtuoso, ap. Southey, Com. Place B. i. 77.

‡ Souvenirs de St. Acheul. § Ib.

have heard and experienced. I am about to mention very puerile things, but their number and agreement move me. As far as I can I will relate them accurately, without tracing them to any cause. I would, if I could, speak of them worthily, "nec tamen quasi Pythius Apollo, sed ut homunculus unus e multis."

Little John used always to talk of his being in heaven first, and of his seeing his elders come there after him. We have had occasion to mention this fact already. It was singular, at all events; and here follow a number of other things, of which the memory, at least, is counted a certain treasure, whatever may be thought of them by strangers. He received a valentine on the last anniversary of the day appropriated to such letters that he was ever to pass. It contained these words: "Love never dies." There was a song he used latterly to sing, in laughing every day at the dining-room door, where he waited to see pass one he greatly loved. Sooth, it was childish enough, but this was the burden of it:

"Oh, Maunie!
When I am dead and buried,
Cry no more for me."

Every Sunday he used to walk with Anne, one of the domestics. Shortly before he sickened, he bought for her a brooch set with forget-me-nots. "Oh, how pretty!" she exclaimed. "Tut, tut," he replied, "you will soon have a handsomer one." Three weeks after, she received a valuable gold brooch filled with the dead boy's hair. The last present that he gave his good young lady governess was a little print of his own choosing, representing a Trappist digging a grave, with this inscription, "To-day for me; to-morrow for thee." When she left to spend her vacation at Paris, she was greatly surprised at his manner of bidding her adieu. He seemed to take rather a cold leave of her, with a kind of solemn, but would-be careless look, as much as to say, "Well, go—but—" It is true he was a little ailing at the time. The last day he heard mass, some one turned round to look at him in his corner. That person almost shuddered, so struck was he with the boy's countenance. There was something in it more than gravity, and yet it

sweet! Some say, "that all things to be done as here we live, are done before all times in the other life, and that shadows of them have been seen forerunning thus their bodies." The last time that he ever went to take a drive, he sat on the coach-box as usual. It was the day before he sickened. It was late in June; the carriage was open. "Why are you so silent, John?" asked his best friend, knowing how he used always before to like chatting with the coachman. John replied not, only smiled. "He is full of thought," said the driver, turning round and laughing. "Why, mamma," said John, "it's only that I've nothing to say." Ah, little one, not so!

"Thou hast, midst life's empty noises,
Heard the solemn steps of time,
And the low mysterious voices
Of another clime*."

Eight days hence he is, for the first time since his birth, to leave his home, and his house, and his mother, from whose side nothing hitherto could tear him, and his sisters, and his brothers, and his faithful retriever, and the shrubs of his garden, and the plots that he has tilled, and the flowers, which are now in full bloom, waiting to be gathered to be strewed upon his cold body!

De Quincey has a most solemn passage respecting the solitude which seems to be, sooner or later, appointed for us all;—but only to think of that little sweet soul left to meet death alone! snatched from life, from mother, sisters, brothers, and all the charms of existence! He is driving out now through the dear scenes he loves, but next week he will have to travel alone beyond the stars into eternity. So God seems to communicate to him a sense of what he is about to witness. To-day he sees what he doats on, the horses, and the fields, and the waving corn, but he heeds them not. He sits by the friendly coachman, with whom he loved to chatter, but he speaks not. He sits before his mother, with looking at whom he could never be satiated, but he turns not a joyous face as he was wont to nod at her; he is silent—"He is full of thought," said the old coach-

* Whittier.

man, laughing. O my God, what a thing is this to contemplate! —"nothing to say!" ah!

> " ——— 'Tis vain to hide
> What thou dost know of things mysterious,
> Immortal, starry; such alone could thus
> Weigh down thy nature *."

Nor was his eldest brother left without presentiments respecting what approached to himself. And first let us notice what, of course, might be only coincidences, and the result of chance, if there be such a thing at all. In a little boyish diary written a few years before was found this entry: "To-day papa said I might learn the flute. K—— showed me the notes, and at six, P.M., I could play, 'Love not; the thing you love may die.'" A few weeks before he sickened, talking one day with a young friend, he said to him, "I like that black horse of mine. I wish he might be led after my body at the funeral." The other stared, and only laughed; but Thomas stuck to the point, and repeated his wish.

> " ——— equum duci jubet: hoc decus illi,
> Hoc solamen erat."

One might have said to him that moment, in Homer's style, "Ah, boy!

> ——— τοι θάνατος καταθύμιος ἐστιν,
> ὃς δή τοι σχεδόν ἐστι."

A week before his illness, he presented himself of his own accord to serve at mass one morning in the domestic chapel; and he discharged that little office with such a delicate, reverential, modest air, that it recalled, to more than one observer, the days when he used to serve as a little acolyte at St. Roch, when that particular church seemed to be really, as was once noticed in another work, the object of his love. There was one present that morning who felt moved to say how he loved him, after coming out; but of course he did not say it. The other would have never forgiven him, if he had even noticed his devout manner. The nephew of his great friend, young René Marie-Albert de Jouenne d'Esgrigny, a year afterwards,

* Keats.

seems to have evinced a similar impression just before he sickened for his death. There was in the church an air of beatitude about him. It was observed that there was something heavenly in his countenance. But to return to our Thomas. The last day that he hunted he came home early. He was thoughtful and, he knew not why, grave. His bay mare, he said, merely relating it as something odd, refused to take leaps such as she never before refused, and at one of them, actually stretching out her feet before her, stood stock still. It was like Hastings saying,

> "Three times to-day my foot-cloth horse did stumble,
> And startled, when he look'd upon the Tower,
> As loth to bear me to the slaughter-house."

Only once more he mounted his horse, and that was the next day, to accompany one he loved, who likewise from that day never rode again, having soon after him, in a certain sense,

> "Steer'd the same course to the same quiet shore;"

to both of whom the next line may be applied,

> "Scarce parted now, and soon to part no more."

He returned this time, too, pensive generally; and, besides, lamenting bitterly that the locket containing his late little brother's hair, had fallen, he knew not how, from his neck, and was lost. It seemed as if he were to have no more need of such a memento: and so it was, as the event proved. However, he had his ride, with one he was proud of; and his look over the fields that day was his last farewell to nature.

He remained troubled at the loss of the hair. He seemed as if agitated with some secret views. He asked what day All Souls' would fall on that year, as he had heard that All Saints' would be on a Saturday. His manner of anxiously putting this question was noticed at the time as somewhat singular. Was it that he felt like Buckingham, making a similar inquiry, and that he saw a connexion between All Souls' Day and his body's doomsday? The last time he was ever out of the house alive, returning home apparently in his usual health, he met a friend who asked him whither he was going? He replied, "I am going home to have my last sickness."

"——— Man foretells afar
The courses of the stars; the very hour
He knows when they shall darken or grow bright!
Yet doth the eclipse of sorrow and of death
Come unforewarned."

After such little details heard in the Children's Bower, it is hard to be of this poet's belief. Methinks one who held once "Epicurus strong, and his opinion, might now change his mind, and partly credit things that do presage."

Reader, if you have never had experience of what is about to be related, you may close the book. It is not for you. I have read it over, and it is nothing, nothing in the world. I wish then devoutly that you may know no more of its contents. But if the common events I am about to mention, in order to unclog my heart of what lies heavy to it, can recall your personal afflictions, I would commune with you of such things that want no ear but yours. O then come hither, and, as an old author says, "lay my book, thy head and heart together."

Let me then repeat it, and this time in the words of a poet—

"If any spirit breathes within this round
Uncapable of mighty passion,
Who winks and shuts his apprehension up
From common sense of what men were, and are;
Who would not know what men must be; let such
Hurry amain from our black-visaged shows;
We shall affright their eyes. But, if a breast,
Nail'd to the earth with grief; if any heart
Pierc'd through with anguish, pant within this ring;
If there be any blood, whose heat is choked
And stifled with true sense of misery;
If aught of these strains fill the consort up,
They may arrive most welcome."

But come we to our narrative, which, though due but to a single breast, needs must be forgiven; for

"——— No mind that's honest,
But in it shares some woe; though the main part
Pertains to one alone."

"What, master John, are you going out fishing?" "Y-

going to fish for the first time this summer." Such were the question and answer between the youngest of our bower, for whom I almost fancy, dear reader, that you feel affection, and a common boy that he liked very much. In fact, that day, though it was cold and raw, the fondest loved of our circle would go to fish. One might have thought that the fairies had changed him, for he shows impatience. Nothing else will content him. He had cried even for pence to buy a fishing-rod—he who was never known to cry before—in fine, he has carried his point; there he goes with rod, such as it is, in hand, his chosen dear young lady governess and little May escorting him,

"———— with light
And airy step, and mien of such a grace
As breathes through marble from the sculptor's dream,
He passed; and after him the stranger's eye
Turn'd with inquiring gaze."

After some hours he returned cold, and expressing disappointment, saying, "he would never fish again;" he felt chilled and fatigued, and in that state he was found on the following day, by one who had just returned home after a short absence.

The ancients tell us that when they asked a certain man what had blindness caused him, he replied, "It had made him more a companion to one little boy." It was not blindness to others that moved the person just mentioned; but certainly this little boy was every day more and more his companion. And in him he thought he had lived, as Volumnia says,

"To see inherited his very wishes,
And the buildings of his fancy."

So now this stranger to you, reader, came back in great delight, thinking how he should walk and row with Jack, and spend in an Arcadian way the happy time, "when shepherds pipe on oaten straws," and every field is fragrant.

"———— Life's very toys
With him, said he, will take a pleasant charm;
It cannot be that aught will work him harm."

His journey home was enlivened with these prospects; for if the little one could row as far out and back as "the white buoy" last summer, what will he not be able to achieve in that way now that he is a year older? He never thought "irremeabilis undæ" which was to be passed by his companion; and, moreover, he had a kind of self residing with him. So he could sing,

"On the bird's wing I do fly
After summer merrily;
Merrily, merrily shall I live now,
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough."

Well, he arrived as I have said; and there was the loved one, pale, and shivering, and weak.

"Infelix! nati funus crudele videbis!
Hi nostri reditus, expectatique triumphi!
Hæc mea magna fides!"

So, in brief, the boy sickened, fell into a fast, thence to a watch, thence into a weakness, thence to a lightness, and by this declension—after only eight days!—into the arms of death. The echo to my heart was gone.

"Oh, thou untaught! what manners is in this,
To pass before thy father to a grave?"

At first, the whole event seemed but as a hideous dream—a thing impossible. The fact was without one though.

"For where is he, who at this calm hour
Ever watched my coming to see?
He is not at the door, nor yet in the bower;
I call—but I only hear on the flower
The hum of the laden bee *."

In the loveliest ideal of the poets I find the true and exact portrait of this child, though

"——— one so young and goodly,
So sweet in his own nature, any story
Hath seldom mention'd."

* Bryant.

I have no occasion to paint him in any other words but theirs,

> "A dovelike bosom. In truth, there is no freeing
> One's thoughts from such a beauty."

> "———— 'Twas pretty, though a plague
> To see him every hour; to sit and draw
> His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls,
> In our heart's table; heart too capable
> Of every line and trick of his sweet favour;
> But now he's gone, and my idolatrous fancy
> Must sanctify his relics."

The Lord had heard his voice in the morning *—in the morning of his life. With men he grew up in favour as with God. Pliny says of those who saw Trajan enter Rome, "Some declared that after having seen you they had lived long enough; others, that they ought to live longer." Without any fulsome, frigid exaggeration, all might have said on seeing little John, It is a gallant child, one that makes old hearts fresh; they that went on crutches ere he was born, desire yet their life to see him a man.

> "———— 'Twas a child
> In whose large eyes of love there shone, indeed,
> Something to waken wonder. Never sky
> In noontide depth, or softly-breaking dawn—
> Never the dew in new-born violet's cup
> Lay so entranc'd in purity!—
> The ample forehead, but serene with thought,
> And by the rapt expression of the lips,
> They seem'd scarce still from a cherubic hymn,
> And over all his countenance there breathed
> Benignity, majestic as we dream
> Angels wear ever before God †."

In the language of another poet (and pray take not such citations as affected, for how could I find words of my own to describe such beauty?) I would say of him,

* Ps. v. † Holmes.

"As pure and sweet, his fair brow seemed—
Eternal as the sky,
And like the brook's low song his voice—
A sound which could not die.

"And half we deemed he needed not
The changing of his sphere,
To give to heaven a shining one
Who walked an angel here.

"The blessing of his quiet life
Fell on us like the dew;
And good thoughts, where his footsteps pressed,
Like fairy blossoms grew.

"Sweet promptings unto kindest deeds
Were in his very look;
We read his face, as one who reads
A true and holy book:

"We miss him in the place of prayer,
And by the hearth's fire's light;
We pause beside his door to hear
Once more his sweet 'good-night*!'"

We have hastily slightly sketched the manner of his death. I am not going to part with him so. Let us take up again, as it were, the same air, and repeat it at more length, with some of the varied tones of each day's more and more intense sorrow.

On this person's return, then, who finds him stretched upon the sofa, unable to run about as usual, he said, looking at him sorrowfully, "What a misfortune to see you lying so!" "Oh, pa!" he replied, with a sort of admonitory smile, and a tone half affecting manliness, "Oh, pa! it can't be help'd." His weakness increasing, he staggered rather than walked.

"When feeble man is bending to his mother,
The dust he was first framed on, thus he totters."

Still John would be gay; he will smile till death; and he greatly wishes to see the ponies in the circus, that have just arrived. He called for his straw hat, and almost cried when

* Whittier.

refused it; but he consented with a good grace not to go, on hearing that there would be many circuses in the town during the summer. He was, however, carried to his bed, though in the morning, when every one was going to mass, he had sufficient boyish fun left in him to say, "I'll play them a trick, and get up when they are gone down." Hearing that a large ship was being towed within sight, he was eager to get up to see it from the window.

But now, what others had to mark was, the force of his disease, how it increased, and how it could change that beautiful countenance, assimilating it to what one sees in pictures, like that large painting in the church of St. Roch, at Paris, where is represented a sick boy, from fever seeming to out-stare Time; and how it caused his little hand to shake like that of an old man, as he raised the cup of medicine to his lips, for he would help himself, and out of his own cup too, as long as it was possible; and that he might be permitted to do so was now to be his last request. Growing delirious, he sang "Cheer, Boys, Cheer" and the "Promised Land." Then, at intervals, he prayed fervently. Always devout to the blessed Virgin, he could be heard repeating, in a low voice, the "Memorare." Hearing the Angelus bell sound from St. Augustin's tower, he started, sat bolt upright in his bed, signed himself, and then pointed to something, as if to direct his sister's attention, and kept with his finger pointing all round the room. Holy rites were then administered to him, the unction of eternal life; and he was tranquil; but in the night following, low moans broke from him continuously.

"Who would not lend a sympathizing sigh,
To hear the sweet boy's pity-moving cry?
That feeble sob, unlike the new-born note,
Which came with vigour from the opening throat,
When air and light first rush'd on lungs and eyes,
And there was life and spirit in the cries;
Now an abortive, faint attempt to weep
Is all we hear; sensation is asleep!"

Oh! there can be but one end to this; each one seemed to say, Glide softly to thy rest then; death should come gently to one of gentle mould like thee! He could not speak, but

his looks were language. "Hush! hush!" his dearest friend would say, and then he tried to stifle those sad moans, and, taking her hand, would draw it near him, under the coverings. Then was there seen one of courage greater than that of Hagar in the wilderness who could only say,

"God stay thee in thine agony, my boy!
I cannot see thee die; I cannot brook
Upon thy brow to look,
And see death settle on my cradle joy.
How have I drunk the light of thy brown eye!
And could I see thee die?
I did not dream of this when thou wast straying,
Like an unbound gazelle, among the flowers;
Or wiling the soft hours,
By the rich gush of water-sources playing,
Then sinking weary to thy smiling sleep,
So beautiful and deep *."

But the moments hasten to arrive, when a little, pallid, fluttering soul has to be bid speed to its future destination, in higher words than were heard within the villa of Puteoli,

"Animula vagula, blandula
Hospes, comesque corporis,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca
Pallidula, rigida, nudula,
Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos."

These are the moments that explain the words of the office. "He found tribulation and grief." Yes; just before his death, of him who had so lately said heroically, "It can't be help'd," two great tears rolled down the cheeks. But he had called on the name of the Lord—the Lord who hath care of little ones, who will save his soul from death, his eyes from tears, and his feet from falling; he will henceforth please the Lord "in regione vivorum." "Happy those," exclaims Pindar, using words that we might all ponder on with benefit—"happy those who have beheld the mysteries before being placed underground; they know the ends of life, and the commencement

* Willis.

which God gives." That happiness, in the high sense of truth, was his.

There was one, without having ever heard them, who knew all this. They repeat the prayers of the departing.

> "She watch'd his breathless slumber; the low moan
> That from his lips so long broke fitfully,
> Had silenced with the midnight; and a smile—
> Or something that would fain have been a smile—
> Play'd in his parted mouth; and though his lids
> Hid not the brown of his unconscious eyes,
> His senses seem'd all peacefully asleep."

That disconsolate one, with a voice of firmness, in all but dissolution, repeated the words which close the Litany.

> "Then gazed affrighten'd; but she caught a last
> And dying look of love, and all was past!"

Let us rise, he's gone for ever!

> "I know when one's dead and when one lives;
> He's dead as earth; lend me a looking-glass,
> If that his breath will mist or stain the stone,
> Why then he lives———if it be so,
> It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
> That ever I have felt. But no—he's gone!"

What next is heard? 'Tis,

> "———— wherefore mourn?
> The child is dead, and I shall go to him—
> But he will not return to me."

But there he seems to be yet before us.

> "———— so still!
> 'Tis a soft sleep! How beautiful he lies,
> With his fair forehead, and the rosy veins
> Playing so freshly in his sunny cheek!
> How could they say that he would die! O God!
> I could not lose him! I have treasured all
> His childhood in my heart, and even now,
> As he has slept, my memory has been there,

Counting like treasures all his winning ways—
His unforgotten sweetness *."

Agony and the first bursts of grief had then their way. An hour afterwards, the night being almost at odds with morning, there is one who sees two remaining sons seated in silence on the balcony of the next room. The casement stands open. 'Tis between twelve and one. The moon rises slowly over the sea. Those boys are watching it; not a word is uttered: only the distant wave is heard. O God! can he ever live to forget that silence and that spectacle? "A breath from the region of spirits seemed to float in the air of night." Where now is his little companion?

"Not the moon thus
Riding at midnight in her crystal chariot,
With all her courtiers in their robes of stars,
Is half so glorious."

The brothers sat in silence gazing on it—one of them little aware that he was himself so soon to be initiated in the same mysteries of eternity. More than half the darkness now is past. Night will soon fly before the beam when poured on the hill. The young day will return; but John returns no more. It was an hour to look inward.

"While thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,
Rush'd, chasing countless thoughts along."

Oh! well might the poet tell us,

"There exist moments in the life of man,
When he is nearer the great God,
Than is man's custom."

It was such a moment now, when, leaning against the window, memories crowding memories,

"He look'd out far upon the darksome sea;
His whole life, past and future, in this moment,
Before his mind's eye glided in procession."

"Quel jour, que celui qui ouvre l'absence!"

* Willis.

"This day hath parted friends
That ne'er before were parted; it hath knit
New friendships; it hath seen the maiden plight
Her faith, and trust her peace to him who long
Hath wooed. . . . . One glad day
Is added now to childhood's merry days.
——— The mother from the eyes
Of her sick infant shades the painful light,
And sadly listens to his quick-drawn breath;
Oh! thou great movement of the universe,
Or change, or flight of time—for ye are one!
That bearest silently this visible scene
Into night's shadow, and the streaming rays
Of starlight, whither art thou bearing me?"

But let us return to the room where the once smiling, playful boy, all the day long caressing and caressed, sleeps like cold marble.

"Within that inner room his couch they spread,
His funeral couch; with mingled grief and love,
They laid a crown of roses on his head,
And murmured, Brighter is his crown above;
They scattered round him on the snowy sheet,
Laburnum's strings of sunny-coloured gems,
Sad hyacinths and violets dim and sweet,
And purple blossoms on their dark-green stems."

Many come to gaze upon him; for here is no "mutilated parting," as when "tainted with fear was that farewell sacred to love and grief, which sought not to be detected*." Here the longest day of summer seems short to those who pass it on their knees. People say to each other by their looks,

"——— He was young to die.
The countenance whereon his parents dwelt,
With their fond grateful smile—the soft fair lines
Breathing of hope—were still all eloquent,
Like life well mock'd in marble."

Truly the face of this boy, so lately suffering, was now sublime.

* De Quincey, Autob. i.

There was a delicate smile, but it was joined with an expression of authority: still the sweet childish figure; still the half-playful, half-pert, though wholly angel face; but, as De Quincey noticed, there too the frozen eyelids, the darkness that seems to steal from beneath them, the marble lips, nothing that could be mistaken for life—and yet what this great writer did not notice, there was something higher than the life that is gone in what lay there; something in the presence of which you felt instinctively compelled to fall upon your knees, and say, Kneel, kneel, kneel every one! In his face shines more awful majesty, than dull, weak mortality dare with misty eyes behold. It speaks of heaven:

> "There in the twilight cold and gray,
> Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay;
> And from the sky, serene and far,
> A voice fell, like a falling star,
> Excelsior*!"

Accordingly, three days after, a young man, when he saw what face death gave him, was so moved, that he went his way, and without saying a word to any one, for some reason known only to himself, burnt all his own books, and then applying to a stranger, offered himself to be instructed in the religion of his late little master. Objections were raised; dangers were anticipated; difficulties were urged; delays were interposed to prove him; but his was a resolution to wait if so required, but to persevere. No one counselling him, no one persuading him, no one encouraging him, he did persevere; and nine months afterwards, on St. David's Day, the priest who fixed that day not knowing that it was the anniversary of little John's birth, this neophyte made his first communion. The chamber, therefore, presented a scene like one in the primitive times of the Church, when the guards that beheld the deaths of the Christians used to be so impressed by the spectacle of innocence and suffering, as to be converted on the spot, one may say miraculously, thus.

But to pursue our narrative and our poor reflections, such as they are, and utter what my sorrow gives me leave.

* Longfellow.

The human mind, as if by a kind of instinct guided, believes in the happiness of such deaths, saying with the poet,

"He is gone.————————
He the more fortunate! yea, he hath finish'd!
For him there is no longer any future—
His life is bright—bright without spot it was,
And cannot cease to be. No ominous hour
Knocks at his door with tidings of mishap.
Far off is he, above desire and fear;
No more submitted to the change and chance
Of the unsteady world. O 'tis well
With him!"

Yes, and it will be well with others, too, if they only profit by the lesson. For what often prevents our attending to eternal things, is the notion, frequently inexact, that those we love on earth do not attend to them. Let one of these persons be called away to the other world, and then we know that, however pious he may have been in life, those eternal things are now, at least, supreme, or, rather, all in all in his estimation. Accordingly, we wish to imitate him, as far as we can, in that respect, in order to feel ourselves still more than ever in communion with his spirit. Our transfigured friend becomes thus our apostle.

But in all this that we witness, what a lesson of mutability, needed by many, however common! "Nonne verum est quia aruit fœnum, et flos decidit?" Yet still the boy is beautiful. There is employed a trembling hand, endeavouring to profit by the brief moments, and to catch on canvas the unearthly smile, the look of angelic innocence, of celestial majesty, which cannot last beyond a few hours. There he yet lies,

"Qualem virgineo demessum pollice florem,
Seu mollis violæ, seu languentis hyacinthi
Cui neque fulgor adhuc, necdum sua forma recessit."

Inscriptions are mingled with the flowers strewed upon him. We read, "Calix passionis amarus est, sed omnes morbos penitus curat." We read as in the catacombs, given by Marini,—

"Roges pro nobis, quia scimus te in Christo."

It was, in fact, an occasion for inscribing such words as were used in primitive times,—"Depositus in pace;" "Dormit in pace,"—and for representing, too, the dove with an olive branch, or Jonas, which are symbols of the future life, suitable to what St. Ambrose called the cradle of those who are to rise, —"incunabulum resurgentis." But think me not so obdurate as to deny that, in the commonest human way, tearful was that room, with all its lights and fragrance from the tapers! Many come, no doubt, to look upon him. Strangers even to his faith ask leave, and do not say 'tis superstition that they kneel. Then, after a short pause, comforters and mourners went their way.

> "But death stay'd on: we had been oft alone! but this
> Was more than solitude. The silence now
> Was void of expectation. Something felt
> Always before, and loved without a name—
> Joy from the air, hope from the opening door,
> Welcome and life from off the very walls,—
> Seem'd gone; and in the chamber where he lay
> There was a fearful and unbreathing hush
> Stiller than night's last hour."

But the much-dreaded day steals on us, which, by anticipation, we attempted to describe in part as prelude to this book. The fragments of the tale may now be joined together, prefixing this last part to the sequel that already has been told, thereby uniting the beginning with the end.

> "So now the hour is come, the priest is there,
> Torches are lit, and bells are tolled; they go,
> With cheerful rites of blessing and of prayer,
> To bear him far, and funeral rites bestow."

Reader, as I've said, what to this was sequent thou knowest already.

The first feelings after such a void made in the bower are not for words to describe, unless it be such as "Undone and forfeited to grief for ever!" That's not the time for expressing aught, unless you would patch grief with proverbs, and make sorrow drunk with poetry. That's not the time for citing even "strain

of woe for strain," unless it be some half-barbarous, and but half-intelligible ditty, like the song of the Indian woman, which satisfies this want by the last line, of which we do not ourselves know the meaning:

"The dark eye has left us,
The spring-bird has flown;
On the pathway of spirits
He wandered alone.
The song of the wood-dove has died on our shore,
Mat wonck, kunna-monee!—we hear it no more*."

It is a homage due to goodness, even in a child, to declare the emotions that its loss produces; so I shall pursue this theme. Then some are heard to say, like Claudio, "I am so out of love with life, that I will sue to be rid of it." To me life can be no commodity—the crown and comfort of my life I've lost; the bird is dead that we made so much on.

"——— All days to me
Henceforth are equal; this the day of death,
To-morrow, and the next, and each that follows,
Will undistinguish'd roll."

Almeria's words are applicable now; and we shall hear—

"The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of;"

or even

"My mind is troubled like a fountain stirr'd;
And I myself see not the bottom of it."

Then some talk wildly:

"——— Let me be plain
If I should speak as much as I should speak,
If I should talk of a thousand things at once,
And all of thee; of thee, my child, of thee,
My tears would utter most."

Then some affect even to make use of burlesque images, saying,

* Whittier.

"All my other thoughts languish, for the reason that great fish eat up the little;" for we put on gaiety in language then, as most becoming; though, in fact, it is because it expresses best what is within us. Extremes meet.

> "He died and left to me
> These clothes, this calm and quiet scene
> The memory of what has been,
> And never more will be."

There still hang by the wall his little sword and the tunic he last wore. As Constance says, when told she was as fond of grief as of her child:

> "——————— Yes,
> Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
> Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me;
> Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
> Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
> Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form;
> Then have I reason to be fond of grief."

There is, besides, the hair to be distributed in rings and lockets. "Hair," says Leigh Hunt, "is at once the most delicate and lasting of our materials, and survives us like love. It is so light, so gentle, so escaping from the idea of death, that with a lock of hair belonging to a child we may almost look up to heaven, and compare notes with the angelic nature, and say, 'I have a piece of thee here not unworthy of thy being now.'" But to return; and oh! gentle reader, bear with iteration. "He is gone," sob out surviving innocents, "gone to happier bowers." "Ay," replies another, not of their category; "but to me, literally, has he left groans:"

> ——— ἐμοὶ δ' ὀδύνας τε γοους τε
> κάλλιπεν.

> "I know not if the sunshine waste—
> The world is dark since thou art gone!
> The hours are, oh, so leaden-paced!
> The birds sing, and the stars float on,
> But sing not well, and look not fair—
> A weight is in the summer air,

And sadness in the sight of flowers;
And if I go where others smile,
Their love but makes me think of ours,
And heavier gets my heart the while,
Like one upon a desert isle *."

You see, then, at first, that it is only the secrets of intense grief that can be learnt from the memories of the bower, when innocence is taken away from it unexpectedly and abruptly thus. The taking away of John was to his bower, of course, what could not be expressed; but a stranger might liken it to the death of the innocent dauphiness at the court of Louis XIV., when with that presence were eclipsed joy, pleasure, amusement, and all that was gracious. Darkness ensued and covered all things. In one respect the resemblance was perfect; for if the bower subsisted afterwards, it was only, like that court, "to languish and exist by memories." Then you felt

"As if bewailing nightingales did borrow
Plaints of thy plaint, and sorrows of thy sorrow."

Then might have been added words like these of the poet, saying,

"——— I shall hear the gush
Of music, and the voices of the young;
And life will pass me in the mantling blush,
And the dark tresses to the soft winds flung;
But thou no more, with thy sweet voice, shalt come
To meet me!
All things are dark to sorrow; and the light,
And loveliness, and fragrant air were sad
To the dejected—the moist earth
Was pouring odours from its spicy pores,
And the young birds were singing as if life
Were a new thing to them; but music came
Upon his ear like discord, and he felt
That pang of the unreasonable heart,
That, bleeding amid things it loved so well,
Would have some signs of sadness as they pass †."

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* Longfellow. † Ib.

Yes, on this occasion, there is one who feels what he has lost in him:

> "This poor epitome of his,
> Which, by the interpretation of full time,
> Would show so much better than himself."

The invisible one, no doubt, enjoys the supreme bliss in heaven's own bright fields; "mais quand l'éternité est heureuse le temps gémit encore." "The bloom," such mourners then may say, "is vanished from my life:"

> "——— His accents bland
> Still sounded in my ears, when I no more
> Could hear his footsteps touch the gravelly floor."

The old Christianity yielded, with all the intensity of human feelings, to such impressions. St. Augustin furnishes an instance when he loses his friend. "My heart," he says, "was darkened, and every thing I saw was death. My country was a punishment, and my paternal house unhappiness, and whatever I used to enjoy along with him was changed into a source of immense sorrow." Literally so did one who mourned find it now. He stalked about John's former haunts

> "Like a strange soul upon the Stygian banks
> Staying for waftage."

So, too, it was with others:

> "In every place they wandered where he'd been,
> And sadly sacred held the smiling scene,
> Then went again, and thus their hours employ,
> While visions please them, and while woes destroy."

John's bereaved companions now contracted quite an affection for the scenes where his last days were spent, as if wishing ever to ask, like Drummond of Hawthornden,

> "Are these the flow'ry banks, is this the mead,
> Where he was wont to pass the pleasant hours?
> Is this the goodly elm did us o'erspread?"

Remove them for a while from that fatal shore, the scene of such disasters, and they long to return to it. Satisfy their longing, and you can apply to them the line,

"Et tandem læti notæ advertuntur arenæ.

They seemed to feel

"The spiritual presences of absent things;"

so that they might be thought addressing the object of their love, and saying to him, "Thou still art in the bower, John,"—

"Yes, in each leaf of yon o'ershadowing tree
I read a legend that was traced by thee.
Yes, in each line that scores the grassy sod,
I see the pathway where thy feet have trod.
Ye who have known the sudden tears that flow—
Sad tears, yet sweet, the dews of twilight woe—
When, led by chance, your wandering eye has crossed
Some poor memorial of the loved and lost,
Bear with my weakness as I look around
On the dear relics of this holy ground;
These bowery cloisters, shadowed and serene,
My dreams recall, and what mine eyes have seen *."

For some time, as I said, grief admits of nothing but itself. Then, at last, poetry will venture, as if by stealth, to come and offer its distractions, not to enervate, as Plato, speaking for once like a sophist, would pretend, but simply to describe what exists in spite of all philosophy. Then, after a long interval, when one looks back quietly on these first days of separation, it is marvellous to observe with what fidelity they have been related by Homer in his representation of the grief of Achilles. There is not a sentence in that passage which Socrates is represented as condemning—not a word, if you except the local and nominal allusions, that was not literally verified in those who now bewailed another friend and companion:

κλαῖε, φίλου ἑτάρου μεμνημένος, οὐδέ μιν ὕπνος
ᾕρει πανδαμάτωρ· ἀλλ' ἑστρέφετ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα.

* Holmes.

* * * *

τῶν μιμνησκόμενος, θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυον εἶβεν,
ἄλλοτ' ἐπὶ πλευρὰς κατακείμενος, ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε
ὕπτιος, ἄλλοτε δὲ πρηνής· τότε δ' ὀρθὸς ἀναστὰς
δινεύεσκ' ἀλύων παρὰ θῖν' ἁλός.

The exactness of this picture is startling to one who has had experience of such sorrow. It is as if he beheld an image of himself as he once was, fixed enchanted in a mirror, or as if some one had drawn his portrait some thousand years ago. It is not a literary pleasure that the passage yields—one is insensible to all that—it is a penetrating and religious sense of the wonderful identity of human nature in each individual.

But, in fine, though as the Duc de Beauvilliers found by experience, such deaths wound irremediably,—when the spirit of the bower has been ever felt, grief at length assumes exteriorly, at least, a milder form; and mourners, in a certain indefinable way, are to a certain extent for the greatest part of each day, at least, led to grieve as though they grieved not, their attention being distracted, moreover, by the ceaseless current of hourly and insignificant events. Indeed, it is a singular fact that great grief in general, when long protracted, only changes us imperceptibly to ourselves, without leaving a consciousness of its presence; till, if there should ever be a sudden removal of the cause, there will ensue a contrast which will be like a return of youth to the old. In the cases we are contemplating, however, such returns, of course, can only be hoped for in another life. Still, as I have said, the memory of the loved one is no longer pure bitterness, though we have still "the yearning too obstinate after one irrecoverable face."

"———— Within the heart is his image,
Clothed in the beauty of love and youth, as last we beheld him,
Only more beautiful made by his deathlike silence and absence.
Into our thoughts of him time enters not, for it is not.
Over him years have no power; he is not changed, but transfigured *."

But how is this new change wrought in them? Perhaps it will be well to remain here a moment and inquire.

* Longfellow.

The consolation which the world offers on such occasions is soon told. "Speak no more of him—give me a bowl of wine!" —such is the comfort Brutus takes, which makes Messala exclaim,

"Even so great men great losses should endure:"

and if so, 'twere better, methinks, to belong to those of whom it is said,

"Uncommon chances common men can't bear."

But can we escape from this sadness and perturbation by placing ourselves, as Cicero says, "on a cushioned bed, introducing musicians, kindling sweet perfumes?" What can all this do? When calamity overtakes us, it would be better to say with him, "a gravibus illis antiquis philosophis petenda medicina est, non ab his voluptariis*;" though not even these words promise much. Sometimes, however, the world's counsel is less revolting. Even exquisite images can be employed by it, as in the lines,

"Weep no more, lady, weep no more,
Thy sorrow is in vain;
For violets pluck'd, the sweetest showers
Will ne'er make grow again."

Then at other times it is full of reason. It says to a father lamenting for his son,

"——— Desine mollium
Tandem querelarum; et potius nova
Cantemus Augusti tropæa
Cæsaris†."

But unless one is a great politician, methinks this leaves the heart pretty much as it was before. At other times, the condoler is more plausible, saying,

"——— neque enim fortuna quærenda
Sola tua est, similes aliorum respice casus
Mitius ista feres."

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* Tusc. iii. † Hor.

This is often expressed by a look which reveals a sense of there being a whole world of misery in the background, which the bravest heart shudders to contemplate, and therefore turns from it with haste, just repeating,

> "Nor are thy fortunes to be wept alone;
> Weigh others' woes, and learn to bear thy own."

Of course, there is then nothing more to be said; but still I would ask, do such looks and lines satisfy, or even in the least relieve you? Ah! after marking and hearing them, you may well turn to some other of the mind's physicians, and address to him the well-known lines,

> " ——— Canst thou
> Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
> Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
> And with some sweet oblivious antidote
> Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff,
> Which weighs upon the heart?"

Well, you have heard the world prescribing antidotes that are altogether frigid, or else insulting. Return to the bower; it has a vacant seat, hearts that are fresh bleeding; it exacts not from us a fortitude insensible to calamity, to which men like St. Augustin and St. Bernard have bowed, showing they were made of flesh and blood; but though, like Vital, as a sinful man, you cannot but like one suffer, you will not have to complain of time misspent in visiting it.

In the first place, the youngest that remains there will remind you of the great solid principles that bring comfort and hope to Christians; there will be no triteness either, let me tell you, in their expression of them. They will seldom, if ever, press you with a consideration of the conditional failings of those snatched away, as if they feared that those they loved could ever have become wicked by living longer; for their instincts are in harmony with what we can conceive of omniscience. It will hardly occur to them that those they mourn for would have turned out scoundrels, especially since they had already arrived at such an age, that each successive year seemed to show them more gracious and thoughtful than the last. They are content with leaving such deaths among the obscurities of

Providence, though they may listen for once to the poet, saying,

> "Mourn not for the child from thy tenderness riven,
> Ere stain on its purity fell!
> To thy questioning heart, lo! an answer from heaven,
> It is well with the child. It is well."

But they will say to you, What did you expect? Was there a report amongst his brothers and sisters that little John was never to die? Why, not even to his holy patron, the beloved disciple of our Lord, was it said by God who loved him, "Non moritur," but only "Tu me sequere."

No! as the old poet says, they feel that England is only a worthy gallery

> "To walk in expectation, till from thence
> Our greatest King call thee to his presence."

Gerson tells a charming story which well suits the Children's Bower. "There was a beautiful woman," he says, "who had a fair son, as mentally gifted as he was comely; but he died in boyhood. His mother wept for him day and night. At length she beheld one day a wondrous vision. She saw a number of young men hastening to blessed seats and fortunate groves and fields, resplendent with the purple light, but she saw not her boy with them. At length, looking intently, she perceived him coming slowly, and as if much wearied, after them; then she asked him why he kept behind so fair a company, and he answered that his tunic was so bathed with her tears, that the weight of the dress fatigued him, and prevented him from following his companions with alacrity; and he added, 'Mother, I beseech you henceforth not to weep for me, but only to pray *.'"

Children know all about the Lord of angels having died for man, "that we might not despair," as St. Augustin says, "of being ourselves one day equal to the angels †." Without having read Pindar, they will remind you that dwelling in the

* Sermo de Consolatione Mortis Parentum.

† In Ps. cxxxvii.

heavens the souls of the pious chant in harmonious hymns The Great Happy One.

——— Ψυχαὶ
Εὐσεβέων δ' ἐπουράνιοι νάοισαι
Μολπαῖς μάκαρα μέγαν ἀείδοντ' ἐν ὕμνοις.

They will say to you,

"Know we not our dead are looking
Downward with a sad surprise,
All our strife of words rebuking
With their mild and loving eyes?
Shall we grieve the holy angels? shall we cloud
Their blessed skies*?"

To whom is John Gerald gone? "To Him," would the young reply, "who made the lilies of the field, the violet and the rose, the voice of the nightingale, the sound of the brooklet, the faces and the forms of those we love." This is a sensual view. Well, and pray, grave stranger, who gave us the senses to admire those works of God's hands? True, little stripling, thou didst depart in thy spring of life;

"Yet grieve not, nor think thy youth is gone,
Nor deem that glorious season e'er could die.
Thy pleasant youth, a little while withdrawn,
Waits on the horizon of a brighter sky;
Waits, like the morn, that folds her wing, and hides
Till the slow stars bring back her dawning hour;
Waits, like the vanish'd spring, that slumbering bides
Her own sweet time to waken bud and flower†."

ὄναρ ἐκ Διός ἐστι, says Homer. "Those who sleep," says Cicero, "being separated from the body are moved by the divine mind; but those who are awake serve the necessities of life, disjoin themselves from the divine society, being hindered by the chains of the body." Homer was an exact observer of the facts connected with our life. His hero came after death and stood before his astonished friend—all night stood, lamenting and weeping,

* Whittier. † Bryant.

Ψυχὴ ἐφεστήκει γοόωσά τε μυρομένη τε.

The child of the bower (I invent nothing; I merely relate what did occur) came after death, or so seemed to come that a real visit could not have produced a different impression, and he stood before his former companion; but he remained exulting and as if glorified; not lamenting, but smiling and rejoicing. The children must, however, speak for themselves; though how shall they tell what is to be uttered in a stranger's ear? My wit, however, is at an end. It is very useful, I know, at intervals to bear in mind, if not to frequent, some kinds of company, in order to be on our guard against a sort of criticism which in general does not exactly recommend itself by either the good nature of its origin, the breadth and elevation of its range, or the refinement and delicacy of its expression; but I suppose such company to be present only elsewhere, and therefore, without any immediate or personal fear of the vulgar, we may relate what follows. Recurring then to a theme before glanced at, when we spoke of childhood's faith in heaven, and cited a child's dream of the same absent one—another instance of the wonderful here occurs to us; and another of the representatives of that faith thus speaks. "I think I saw John yesterday night; it was a most beautiful dream, if it were indeed a dream, for I sat up in the bed and saw all the room just as I might see it now, and ne'er was dream so like a waking. I saw little John, and I said to him, 'Well, John, are you in heaven?' and he said, 'Yes.' I added, 'Without ever going any where else first?' and he said, 'Yes.' I then said, 'Is it true that heaven is so very beautiful?' He answered, 'Yes, it was quite true.' 'What do you do to amuse yourself?' said I. 'Oh! every thing that I like; I play at your own games sometimes.' I then asked him what God was like. John said, 'I must not tell you.' 'Well,' said I, 'what is the blessed Virgin like?' He said, 'Just the same as you see her in her pictures.' I asked him if two people that we knew, who are dead, but whose names I now quite forget, were in heaven, and he seemed to indicate that they were not yet there. I then asked about one or two more, and John said, 'Yes, they were in heaven.' I said, 'Oh! if that person,' meaning a young girl whom I used to think half good and half bad, 'is in heaven, there is a chance for me;' but it is very strange

I cannot now remember the names of any persons I asked about. At last he said, 'I shall tell you no more who are in heaven, for God would not be pleased.' I then implored him to come and see me again, but he would not answer me, but walked on; he looked over M—y's shoulder, who was with the others looking at something that I could not see, and then I saw no more of him. You know who sleeps in the same room with me, and whom a thunder-storm even cannot rouse. Well, last night she slept for about half an hour, when she was awakened, she thinks, by a light that was near my bed, and she heard a little noise as if some one was moving to and fro very lightly, and as if a third person, whom she was trying to see but could not see, was in the room. All I have to add is, that John looked most beautiful, and his eyes, which were always fine when on earth, shone with a most unearthly brilliancy."

Dreams are toys, yet for this once, yea, superstitiously, some will be squared by them. Was it an inward apparition that gently moved the fancy of a child? Was it a vision objectively presented? "Some dreams," say the schoolmen, "arise from the body, some from the mind, some from malignant spirits, some are from God and from good spirits; and of these latter there is frequent mention in the holy Scriptures, as in authentic histories *." To philosophers, however, in passing may be communicated one fact, which shows that we cannot explain all dreams in the way of Claudian, who says,

"Omnia quæ sensu volvuntur vata diurno
Pectore sopito reddit amica quies."

Thrice a similar dream respecting the same departed one has been experienced by the same children; whereas to their elders, from whose thoughts by day he has been hardly ever absent, and to whom things indifferent are often passing through the gates of sleep, it has never been granted to behold thus his image, or to hear thus his well-known voice.

But enough of this, with over-measure. Let us proceed. You have heard the children. In brief, as some one says, "Sorrow would be a rarity most beloved, if all could so become it."

* Petri de Alliaco, de Falsis Prophetis Tractat.

But how accordant to their counsels or consolation are the responses of mind and intellect, and also, as we are told, of theology itself! "We are rendered so effeminate by softest thoughts," says Cicero, "as to fancy that we are deprived of something great by an early death, as if we were robbed of some great treasure; but is it nothing to meet those in another world, as Socrates said, 'qui juste et cum fide vixerint?' and besides, ought we not to feel assured that to a good person no evil can ever happen, either alive or dead? 'Nos autem teneamus, ut nihil censeamus esse malum quod sit a natura datum omnibus *.'" Still, the children's consolations cannot be expected from the first to prevail, without a dissentient voice being heard. Much that they say about heaven's bliss will be assented to generally; but then some will add objections to its particular application. For instance, we shall hear, "John was so dutiful, so loving to his parents, and to be cut off in the very May-morn of his youth, 'tis shocking, or at least mysterious." Well, we partly heard the answer to that complaint before; but mark what passes around you. I would even rivet your attention to the difficulty that strikes you. Many have heard of young L—n, and of his recent death. He was a boy of remarkable piety, of exemplary goodness. Hearing that his father meditated a certain distant pilgrimage, he prayed to be allowed to join it. His extreme youth seemed an obstacle; but he urged his suit imploringly; and alleged for motive that he wished to pray he might himself have a happy death. Such a plea from one so young was not calculated to further the suit. He was flatly refused; till on the last evening, for some reason not communicated, consent was suddenly given. Quite overjoyed he departed with his friends; the journey was happy; the party returned. The next day, walking on the high road, near Boulogne, the cap of one of his little companions blew off. L—n ran after it, climbed an enclosure, and heedless of the windmill received a blow from the sail. At that moment a priest was passing. "Do you know what I am?" he asked. The little boy signified assent. The minister of God gave him absolution, and received his last breath. So you perceive that

* Tusc. i.

cases of the kind you remark can be multiplied; but what are we to infer from them? Why, in the first place, that

> "'Tis thus, from warm and kindly hearts
> And eyes where generous meanings burn,
> Earliest the light of life departs,
> But lingers with the cold and stern *."

But look even to the ancients — for nothing forbids us to hear what they experienced; and by the natural law filial love deserves reward, not punishment. Recur to the epilogue of the first Tusculan. For when on a day of solemn sacrifice there was a delay in getting horses to draw their father's chariot to the temple, which was at a great distance from the town, Cleobis and Biton, stripping and anointing their limbs with oil, yoked themselves to it, and drew him to the temple; and when he besought heaven that the greatest reward which could be given by God to men might be granted to them in recompense of their piety, the youths after supping with their mother retired to rest, and in the morning were found dead. A similar prayer being offered in their own behalf by Trophonius and Agamedes, received the same answer, both of them dying on the third day after it; and similarly, when Eliseus was lamenting the death of his son, and when he came to inquire from psychomancy what was the cause of such a calamity, he received for answer these three lines—

> "Ignavis homines in vita mentibus errant
> Euthynous potitur, fatorum numine, leto.
> Sic fuit utilius finiri ipsique tibique."

Such narratives of the Gentiles, though mixed up with references to their blindness, are really inspiring. One cannot say the same always of even strictly exact views, when laid down by learned men in modern times, who condole sometimes with mourners in words that are all, no doubt, true; all cautious and all elegant, but which, nevertheless, breathe a certain frigid formality that produces rather stupor than an elevation of heart. There is, nevertheless, even a learned form which, instead of destroying, misleading, or veiling feeling, gives it on

* Bryant.

the contrary more value, and imparts to it a delicacy which, instead of injuring, despising, or neglecting form, sustains it, and adds to its beauty. St. Paulinus, on the death of Celsus, a child of eight years, left an example to show that both intense feeling, and the qualities which the unconcerned would demand, may be combined; for he sings thus beautifully—

"Heu, quid agam ? dubia pendens pietate laboro
Gratuler an doleam: dignus utroque puer.
Cujus amor lacrymas, et amor mihi gaudia suadet;
Sed gaudere fides flere jubet pietas.
Tam modicum patribus, tam dulci è pignore fructum
Defleo in exiguo temporis esse datum
Rursus ut æternæ bona volvo perennia vitæ
Quæ Deus in cœlo præparat innocuis,
Lætor obisse, brevi functum mortalia sæclo
Ut cito divinas perfrueretur opes.
Ne terrena diu contagia mixtus iniquis
Duceret in fragili corporis hospitio,
Sed nullo istius temeratus crimine mundi
Dignius æternum tenderet ad Dominum.
Ergo Deo potius quam nobis debitus infans
Verum et pro nobis ille Deo placitus,
Cœperat octavum producere parvulus annum
Prima citis agitans tempora curriculis.
Nec mora longa fuit: placitam Deus æthere Christus
Arcessens merito sumpsit honore animam;
Et rapuit terris subitam, quo dignior esset
Associata piis vivere conciliis."

But it will be said, Oh! John, after all, was only a boy of eight summers. "'Tis not a life; 'tis but a piece of childhood thrown away:" and how could a soul so young have been sufficiently prepared to receive in another existence what awaits long previous fidelity? "Have you forgotten the labourers in the vineyard, and do you not know," replies St. Augustin, "that the years of grown-up people will often be counted for nothing? A thousand years are but as a night-watch of three hours, and three hours of love and adoration may be ten thousand times a thousand years." But then the understanding was not fully developed; his intellect was not replenished; he was only sensible in the

duller parts? Ah! here we detect the philosopher who has come disguised into the bower. Well, grant to him all he asks. True, though no promise of any sort was denied, we cannot place our John's memory, or that of his brother in that melancholy series, as Villemain terms it, which is presented to us year after year, of young and laborious candidates of literature and science, to whom life is wanting to achieve all that their mind actually aspires to, and all that their peculiar gifts seem intended for already producing; but we can place them among those whose hearts have been cultivated, whose imaginations have been elevated, among those who have loved and died. Notwithstanding the shortness of that life allotted to them, it was impossible for them, had longer time been granted, to have developed more abundantly the best and noblest affections of our nature. No length of years could have enhanced their sensibilities, their love and tenderness, their sense of duty, their veneration for what is holy, or perhaps even their love of God. Only a child! in other words, only one fit for the kingdom of heaven; only one qualified to move the hearts of others for him, with a remembrance that can never perish. Do not, then, O philosopher, make yourself uneasy about the want of intellectual merits in the child. The little stream that lost itself so soon in the ocean ran clear from the first, and may have fulfilled a great purpose before passing to eternal peace. Hear St. Augustin: "Have plenitude of science, and you will be the seat of God as cherubins. But how can you attain to it? Can God require that of us? It is not in knowing the stars, and grains of sand, and fruits that this consists—it is in regard to the law that this plenitude consists. But who can know perfectly the law of God? You and every one else can—for charity is the fulfilling of the law. Have charity, and you will have part in the name of cherubin *." You need not, therefore, be disquieted about the future destiny of "the imperfectly developed intelligence" in the boy;

> "His part is play'd; and though it were too short,
> He did it well: your day is lengthen'd, and
> The blissful dew of Heaven does arrose you."

* In Ps. xcviii.

Fear only lest, perhaps, though devoted to the career of science, your eternity should not be the same as his.

But you say that the sense of what he has lost and what you have lost afflicts you, in spite of yourself, with intolerable sadness, that

> "He, too, had hope—hope ardent, lively, light;
> His feelings pleasant, and his prospects bright."

That you know it is very foolish, but that you cannot help grieving to think how he has lost all sports, delights, and jolly games which he, half angel as he was, once held full dear; that he should no more figure in the dance, nor hear the shrill pleasing sound of merry pipes under some shady dell, when the cool wind plays on the leaves; that he should no more enjoy what Pindar praises, and what your favourite, too, could so well enjoy, "the wisdom of the aged, and the sports of young men, and the harmonious choirs, and the Muse, and the sweet joy." And you say, moreover, that in losing him you have yourself lost all relish for the loveliness of nature, and for the pleasures that this world can yield. Ah, give me your hand, sweet friend! here I recognize no voice of a sophisticated man! Here is no pedantry, no cant, here I can weep tear for tear; but, brother, listen again to St. Augustin: "You, who are a Christian in prosperity, when you say, 'Thy kingdom come,' sound your heart when you say these words—you understand me. Well, the death of your child enables you to say it with sincerity. It is nothing to utter truth if the heart does not accord with the tongue*."

Whether, however, the consolations of the bower be accepted with reserve for a time, or resisted without reason, there is a date set to all sorrows, at least in regard to their form; as, indeed, the poet tells you, adding,

> "Nothing is everlasting in this world.
> These counsels will prevail—persuade him, also
> To fall into life's happiness again,
> And leave the desolate path."

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* In Ps. lxvi.

This flowing in grief, when the smallest twine can lead us—these first evening walks of the survivors with Rose, and Gyp, and Dash, the three dogs of little John—for why omit mention of them, in these strolls always to the same spot, at sunset, when the solitude was undisturbed, and when his image was all in all?—when no word was uttered, no object beheld, no sound heard, without recalling him, his prattle, his walks, his songs, his endearing ways—all this seemed appointed to endure; and truly, while it lasts, 'tis sweet; for then

> "'Tis difficult to feel that he is dead.
> His presence, like the shadow of a wing
> That is just lessening in the upper sky,
> Lingers upon us. We can hear his voice—
> And for his steps we listen—and the eye
> Looks for his wonted coming—with a strange
> Forgetful earnestness. We cannot feel
> That he will no more come—that from his cheek
> The delicate flush has faded, and the light
> Dead in his soft dark eye, and on his life,
> That was so exquisitely pure, the dew
> Of the damp grave has fallen. Who so loved
> Is left among the living!"

Nevertheless, by little and little, even these sweet, fond illusions fade, too, into distance, and seem small and undistinguishable, like far-off mountains turned into clouds. True,

> "Affection's print my mind so deep doth prove,
> I may forget myself, but not my love."

But still, by and by, heaven is no longer the sole constant theme—the boy's bright image there no longer the sole vision. Though parts of us are numbed—though the person is gone to whom this picture, this anecdote, this casual fancy would have suited, which won't do for another—though whole classes of sympathies are destroyed*, earth resumes its sway, with all its vacancies, its temptations, its indefinite cravings, its many pleasures, its more constant woes, unrelieved by any such gleams as we have been experiencing.

* C. Lamb.

But stay a little, or shall I break off now? Perhaps here I should cease to speak—perhaps, if I proceed to make mention of using eyes as fountains so soon again, as to lay the very next coming autumn's dust with them, I shall merit the reproach of having a heart of iron:

Ἆ δείλ', ἦ δὴ πολλὰ κάκ' ἀὔσχεο σὸν κατὰ θυμόν.
πῶς ἔτλης; * * * *
——————— σιδήρειόν νύ τοι ἦτορ.

Yet though his heart is not compact of flint nor steel, he who has once begun to relate these things may as well finish them—since nature puts him to a heavy task, may as well dare to set them down in order as they happened. He will have to plead guilty to repetition: it is unavoidable, it is thrust upon him. The reader may well demand of him to find some other subject: too much of one theme cloys, and sooth indulgence must be begged for it. He may be surprised, perhaps offended even, at the pertinacity of such a narrator, and exclaim with a poet,

"How stiff is his vile sense
That he stands up, and has ingenious feeling
Of his huge sorrows!"

Nevertheless, good stranger, all to know, even of such familiar things, may be for your instruction, while it may prove for your heart's good all to pity.

We must resume, then, our narrative; and, though at the risk of wearing out the reader's patience by iteration of sad things, of which the excess has surfeited him who has fed upon this woe already, proceed to relate how death returned to the particular bower of which this last chapter may be said to include the closing history. Let's on, and carry with us ears and eyes for the time, but hearts for the event.

Plutarch, as a philosopher remarks, after citing some fable to prove a case, innocently enough says, that although he had promised to relate no fables, he now finds himself, he knows not how, in the company of Cæranus and Ulysses, and "so he brings his notable argument to a close." I fear I have not profited by the lesson, for, lo, I am about to present you with

another dream, after leaving you to understand that the one before related was sufficient for all purposes. However, as Socrates tells us, "they say it is beautiful to repeat and consider beautiful things twice and even thrice;" and, at all events, in the Children's Bower, one does not so greatly disdain such things, or condemn a little rambling in spite of sage resolutions. So, again, be a child and listen. A few days, then, before the event happened of which I am about to speak, a letter came from John's former bosom friend and governess, from Paris, saying, "I dreamt of him last night. Je le tenais bien serré par la main; comme nous avions peur d'être en retard nous courions, et tout en courant, je ne pouvais me lasser de l'admirer, il était si beau et si pâle! Il m'avait déjà dit des choses bien extraordinaires dont je ne me souviens plus, et voilà que, tout d'un coup, en entrant dans une rue admirable et de largeur et de lumière, nous voyions s'approcher avec grande dignité le pareil cortége, avec toute la même pompe, et le tout, enfin, semblable à celui qu'on fit pour lui à Ramsgate, et cet instant un frisson parcourut tout mon corps; malgré moi, je pressais bien vivement mon petit John dans la crainte qu'on me le prit. Je vis alors ce cher ange d'abord pleurer et s'attendrir sur le sort du pauvre enfant mort. Moi qui me rappelait toutes les scènes douleureuses de Ramsgate, je ne pouvais ôter mes yeux et du cercueil et de su l'enfant. En un moment John me parut des plus magnifiques, il .... Il passait encore mille événements dans ce rêve dont je n'ai pu garder le souvenir; et même tout semble confus dans mon cœur, qui en était tellement ému que toute la matinée chacun me questionnait pour savoir ce qui pouvait me causer tant de tristesse." The dream, after all, perhaps, is not so bad a prelude, reader, to prepare you for what you are about to hear; for, actually, at the same moment that it was experienced, there was this other procession formed —there was in reality an event passing that could never have been foreseen, if a mysterious influence had not thus announced its shadow; and the vague wonder produced by such visions of the night will predispose our audience to hear it fittingly.

Ὦ πόποι, ἦ μέγα θαῦμα τόδ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὁρῶμαι
δεινὸν, ὃ οὐπότ' ἔγωγε τελευτήσεσθαι ἔφασκον!

Yes, here are some again weeping, sitting in the house, ἥμενοι ἐν μεγάρῳ.

"Another hand is beckoning us,
Another call is given;
And glows once more with angel-steps
The path which reaches heaven.
Our young and gentle friend, whose smile
Made brighter summer hours,
Amid the damp of autumn time
Has left us with the flowers.
No paling of the cheek of bloom
Forewarn'd us of decay;
No shadow from the silent land
Fell around our brother's way.
The light of his young life went down,
As sinks behind the hill
The glory of a setting star,
Clear, suddenly, and still*."

The Homeric hero taunts his dying enemy, and predicts that he will give pleasure to his friend already in the regions of the dead for having supplied him with an escort:

γηθήσειν κατὰ θυμόν· ἐπεί ῥά οἱ ὤπασα πομπόν.

The eldest of the circle in the bower may solace himself with the thought that he will find there just arrived before him a play-mate and a brother. Yes, that gay and generous youth, of whom we have so often heard in the course of the preceding pages, and who, in his poor, humble way, has left some examples that the most virtuous may ponder with a good effect, is about to follow the little truant runaway, the angel-child.

But let us precipitate nothing. We can proceed carefully here step by step, and hope for pardon from those who will have but for a few moments more to be detained by my pages.

Already some insight into the unpretending character of this last summoned one has, in the course of the present book, been here and there obtained. Nature willed that his heart, in spite of correctives supplied to him continuously by God all-merciful,

* Whittier.

should be a cheerful one. He might have applied to himself and others the lines of the child's song of "Gilderoy:"

"Wi' mickle joy we spent our prime,
Till I was past sixteen,
And oft we spent the happy time
Amang the leaves sae green."

Or he might have said with the poet,

"When young life's journey I began,
The glittering prospect charm'd my eyes,
I saw along th' extended plan
Joy after joy successive rise."

But death has no time to play for lack of work: children die, and youths die, and, as Virgil remarks, those who pass to the realms of the shades behold them already arrived there with magnanimous heroes:

"——— defunctaque corpora vitâ
Magnanimum heroum, pueri, innuptæque puellæ
Impositique rogis juvenes ante ora parentum *."

Three months only have elapsed since the last separation. The eldest of these sons, then, to give in brief another very simple narrative, bearing it with untired spirits and formal constancy, came home one evening in October chilly and unwell. What a French mother once said to her child might have been often applied to him: "Every one else here thinks of preserving his life and health. It is only you who seem anxious to finish your part as soon as possible." But this youth had a daring soul:

καὶ δ' ἔχει ἥβης ἄνθος, ὅ τε κράτος ἐστὶ μέγιστον.

Indeed, he may be said to have had too much life—more animal vitality in him than his strength of frame could bear out. Still, they who loved him deemed, in their blindness, that his only danger was in the adventurous career he longed for, little thinking that he

νούσῳ ὑπ' ἀργαλέῃ φθίσθαι οἷς ἐν μεγάροισιν.

* Virg. Georg. iv.

But to proceed. These symptoms of approaching illness continued through the night. Then he, whether it was from that presentiment already noticed, and which Cicero says exists in the human mind, which, especially before death, can foresee the future, or, unmoved by it, from the impulse of that grace which never seems to have forsaken him, desired before daybreak that he might see his friend, the venerable priest, to whom he was in the habit of confessing. That man of God, a man of the old simplicity, fervour, and innocence, came and did his holy office. It was followed by a last communion—that ineffable mystery of which we must not speak. He who administered saw the danger at the first glance, but no one else imagined that there was any grave indisposition. Not even she dreamt of it, she to whom some one, observing all things that passed, might apply the epithet, "Unicum antiquitatis specimen *;"—for this truth must escape from me in mentioning her—not even she had fear, whose

> "Duty is to stand and wait,
> In resignation to abide
> The shock, and finally secure
> O'er grief and pain a triumph pure."

The youth himself knew it though. He retained the same conviction all through: "Still I grow sicker in spite of all these potions, father;" he said later, "I feel I cannot stay long." And in effect, though at first no one but the good priest believed him, it was foolish at any time to have much confidence in his remaining with us:

> "Health is at best a vain precarious thing,
> And fair-faced youth is ever on the wing."

As Arcyte says in Chaucer,

> "What is this world? What asken men to have?
> Now with his love, now in his colde grave,
> Alone withouten eny companye."

Sunday came. He was ordered to remain in bed. He sent for

* Tacitus, An. iii.

his missal. He had not finished when some one came after mass to see him. He had been reading prayers for the departing. There the leaf was turned down. The next day fever declared itself—"La fièvre—ah! ma chère enfant!" writes Madame de Sevigné, "quand on a le sang de cette furie, c'est bientôt fait." So again comes the best human friend:

> "She came with smiles the hour of pain to cheer;
> Apart she sigh'd; alone, she shed the tear."

But the boy's part is still played right out.

> "Lively he seem'd, and spake of all he knew,
> The friendly many, and the favourite few."

The man of God returns. He had seen, as I said, what the physician still denied; so he administered the unction of a life immortal. The boy felt better; but the next day, for hope in this world it already seems too late,

> "—— The life of all his blood
> Is touch'd corruptibly; and his pure brain
> (Which some suppose the soul's frail dwelling-house)
> Doth by the idle comments that it makes
> Foretell the ending of mortality."

Then, as we have had occasion to notice elsewhere, he imagined himself from home with strangers. His words were literally those of young Arthur in the old "King John," when, after leaping from the walls he wakes from his trance,

> "Hoe? who is nigh? Some bodie take me up:—
> Where is my mother? let me speak with her."

Yet still religious thoughts occupy him, even in delirium. He is heard uttering them, and praying, "Sweet Jesu, save my soul! Comfort my mother and my father. How will they bear this ruin?" For he thought their fortune gone; as if, humble to the last, it could not be only his own tragic state that made them mourn. Then he said, "Heaven take my fleeting soul, and, mother, all good hap to thee!" By bleeding (his brother had not been bled) the brain is relieved; he is again fully conscious and himself; but his eyes have tears in them; he has seen eternity. Then was literally fulfilled the

words of Johnson: "In those hours nothing appeared to raise his spirits, or gladden his heart, or to excite his attention, but some opportunity for the exercise of the duties of religion. Every thing that terminated on this side of the grave was received with coldness and indifference, and regarded rather in consequence of the habit of valuing it, than from any opinion that it deserved value: it had little more prevalence over his mind than a bubble that was now broken, a dream from which he was awake. All conversation was tedious that had not some tendency to disengage him from human affairs, and open his prospect into futurity." The last letter of Madame de Sevigné, in which she describes the death of Blanchefort, "cet aimable garçon," might be thought to have been written of the youth now stretched before us, who, seen a few days before, might almost have converted a philosopher to the opinion of Antisthenes, who placed the "summum bonum" in alacrity. But where was that good now? Now was seen that heart-rending prodigy described elsewhere by the same French pen, namely, "une vivacité morte, une gaîté pleine de pensées," and even at the end "pleurante." Yes, for as with his brother, two great tears announced the supreme moments. But still, amidst his prayers, with thoughts all fixed upon the other world, he retained his fondness for the bright and cheerful. He was heart-whole; he tried even to look as usual; he called his dog; he sang a sweet little French song, that moved the bystanders to the depths of their soul; he spake some words in Latin, as if wishing to bring back his school-days with his tutor, when he could speak that language fluently; he was playful, smiling, rallying archly the good young Benedictine, who succeeded to the former priest as by his local authority enjoined, for trying to place in easier posture his poor stiffening limbs. With an incomparable detachment he prepared for his passage. No murmur escaped his lips, no word implying regret; he was willing, and resigned to die, to quit all that he delighted in,

> "With all we can call ours, with all our sweetness,
> With youth, strength, pleasure, people, time."

Can boys contemn death? Here is the answer. "I'm quite happy," were among his last words. He said, "I know I'm dying;" but he did not depart

δν πότμον γοόωσα, λιποῦσ' ἀνδροτῆτα καὶ ἥβην.

Are you resigned to leave this world? "Oh yes, I am!" was his reply. It seemed to be an instance of what a great theologian describes, "The arms of God are round him. He is telling him the secrets of his love. He is sealing for him with a Father's kiss the eternity of his beatitude." Having to be moved, he said, "How I trouble you! but it is for the last time:" and then he said, "You will be fatigued, why stay? but no, you'll have time to rest when I am gone." He thanked the physician, called for his sisters and his brother, gazed on them fixedly—looked them farewell; he did not speak; for the reason, I think, that his heart was too full; indeed, you saw it in his eyes. One virtue at his death he did not practise—he forgave no one; but it was for the reason you already can divine; for you have long ago been told that no one could ever persuade him that he had been wronged; certainly, at the age of twenty-one he never had had an enemy. With as little malice will he go to his grave, as he did lie withal in his cradle.

In fine, his agony commenced. These are common things, but we often know little of them. At least, some know nothing of them. For four hours he held in his hand a lighted taper, and would not relinquish it to those who tried to take it from him. He raised himself for a moment upright, held up his scapular with an outstretched arm towards heaven, as if it were a standard against an enemy. The very word, indeed, signifies, we are told, the protection of God; "scapulæ protectio Dei—scapulis suis obumbravit tibi*." It was a noble and a thrilling sight! Then great tears rolled down his cheeks, and he besought audibly the prayers of the assistants. Show me the nails, "Montrez-moi les clous," he said in French, pointing to the crucifix, and he would let no one stand between him and our Saviour's image. Like his holy patron, though it was not want of faith that made him ask to see them, he was shown "locum clavorum," and with him his heart uttered, "Dominus meus et Deus meus!" O happy thought, to place that image before his fading eyes! For as St. Augustin says, "Clavi et

* S. Melit. Clavis. de Homine.

lancea clamant mihi quod verè reconciliatus sum Christo si eum amavero." These were evidently his thoughts. At last the hour of separation comes. It is Sunday, the 12th of October. Slowly had that day passed in bitterness. The bell of the neighbouring church of St. Augustin now tolled for vespers. He grasped the habit of the young Benedictine who knelt by his side, and implored him not to leave him. There was another priest in the church to say them, and he did not leave him. Moreover, to the last he saw, too, round him female heads that expressed "sorrow, dignity, and faith in God." In fine, recovering composure something before the setting of the sun, he took his last leave of this fading light, and with his soul's eyes sought for beams eternal. Gently he breathed, and without a sigh expired, his face immediately assuming for a short interval the look of mere boyish beauty, which had distinguished his earlier years. There was a shriek then from one frantic through anguish; there was the low moan of one that swooned, to be followed on awaking by the laugh of an Ophelia, which continued through the night; there was the silence of the calmed, though of all the most tried heart that seemed in high ecstatic mood exulting—but "hers is a mother's sorrow;" wiser in its further-looking hope than the shriek and the agony that in a swoon expired; for, O God,

> "In the deep lesson that affliction draws,
> We trace the curves of thy encircling laws;
> In the long sigh that sets our spirits free,
> We own the love that calls us back to Thee!"

So the gay young English sportsman, the sweet, clear, noble gentleman, loved by all classes throughout an entire county—the bold horseman, the joyous songster, the friend so noted for his generous, delicate, open, and in the old English sense of the word, merry heart—the familiar comrade of the local youth—the desired at every ball-room—he who has been "a butterfly, a lord of flowers, garlands, love-knots, silly posies, groves, meadows, melodies, and arbour-roses;" all his promises—his goodly growth of graces coming to this—after seeing twenty sweet summers, died like a Bayard, like the Cid, like one of those great and good described by the Duc de Saint-Simon, as edifying the

court of Louis XIV.; or even, we might say, like a monk, like one of the young martyrs of the primitive Church,—died "as one that had been studied in his death, to throw away the dearest thing he owned, as 'twere a careless trifle;" and all this, observe, without his having ever studied, or even read a line about holy deaths, or about mediæval manners; for one who had dipped into that old literature had feared to familiarize him with scenes that he thought he had himself rather infected with his own perversity, than innocently described as so many others have done by the aid of their learning and their genius. All this piety and strict observance was, therefore, spontaneous on his part, the aspiration of nature, the result of an instinctive sense of what was best, or of a puerile docility to the simple sacerdotal instruction yielded to all in common in the Church. It was like, in short, that devotion, described by an eye-witness, of those dying soldiers of our army in the Crimea, who were the objects of his latest admiration and sympathy, when they used to cry out to the Sisters of Mercy, "Sisters, come to us; and to expire in the very act of pressing the crucifix of the nun's chaplet to their lips*." Thus rapid was the whole passage, from the gaiety of a lively youth in full enjoyment of health and spirits, to the devotion of a dying, and I might say, ascetic Christian. Nine days sufficed to bring this pride of the bower from his saddle to the bed of parade on which he was now laid, with flowers such as the season yielded, the year growing ancient, nor yet on summer's death, nor on the birth of trembling winter, dahlias and gillyflowers strewed upon him, as he had himself seen with such affliction so shortly before, awaiting burial, his youngest little brother. Oh! fair youth,

> "How lovely yet thy ruins show, how sweetly
> Even death embraces thee! The peace of heaven,
> The fellowship of all great souls be with thee!"

> "Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
> Nor the furious winter's rages;
> Thou thy worldly task hast done,
> Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages.

* Eastern Hospitals, &c., by a Lady Volunteer.

"Fear no more the frown o' the great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak.

"Fear no more the lightning flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finish'd joy and moan."

For the others, however, all is not yet finished. They must ordain again the sort of fête that seems now appropriate to their house. Under the declining rays of the same summer's sun, there is to be another day of fair and solemn ceremonial; the dream in Paris is to be realized; the youth is to be carried out, and we are to follow him with due solemnities, just as before; only that now, the last gone being so well known, we are to behold,

"Mille viros, qui supremum comitentur honorem
Intersintque patris lacrymis, solatia luctus
Exigua ingentis! misero sed debita MATRI."

Something too much of this.

Reader, that we may not lose sight of the object proposed in this book, by dwelling too long upon a narrative which has no general interest, excepting what it derives from having been the occasion of tears to the most august personage on earth, to whom it chanced to become known, or beyond the light that it may throw on the sufferings to which all flesh is liable, the consideration of which, no doubt, caused those tears, (for how otherwise could one poor stranger youth have deserved to move pity in a mind ever divinely raised upwards, contemplating God from that primal seat?) let us proceed to consider what instruction can be derived from these last scenes which so often interrupt the lessons, and which in this particular instance brought, by still another event consequent on them, to an abrupt conclusion the sittings in the Children's Bower.

A man may be very sick, and yet be able to reason of it. Pray you trust me now. So let us hear reason. Of course every where, and in the case of all periods of life, death is the supreme teacher. What would the world have been without it,

when poison'd hours had bound men up from their own knowledge? But when death strikes in the bower, when his presence is associated with the previous vitality, tenderness, and faith of the young, it is then above all, let me tell you, that his voice is eloquent; so that even in their deaths the children teach us. Even then every formal thing, it is true, seems to go on as usual, after the separation as before. Homer, who paints humanity in all its vicissitudes, has transferred this feature of death's teaching to his canvas. "Your son is given up to you, old man, as you desired," says Achilles to Priam. "He is laid out there, on the bed within. Now go to dinner."

——— *νῦν δὲ μνησώμεθα δόρπου,*

adding, "For Niobe remembered food, who lost twelve children in the house, daughters and youths; she took food, though weeping." Therefore the table is prepared

οἳ δ' ἐπ' ὀνείαθ' ἑτοῖμα προκείμενα χεῖρας ἴαλλον.

What a strange alternation! and yet all this is witnessed now; for nature must obey necessity. Make no noise, make no noise; close the door: so, so, so: we'll go to the room below, so, so, so. The solemn supper is served; there is the food as usual, only that, as I said, there is seated before it with distracted smiles, and wild incoherent talk, with even bursts of laughter, another Ophelia, startling, appalling figure, terrible even to the eyes that had just seen death—one in whom nature, ever fine in love, is sending under that mysterious form some precious instance of itself, after the thing it loves. But even had she not sat there, the great teacher's lessons are heard, if possible, more audibly and impressively, for so incongruous an interlude imposed by human wants. Let us pause to consider calmly, in what all these lessons generally consist.

"The fear of death," says the Père Boutauld, "has produced physicians, and the forgetfulness of death casuists." Believe me, the latter are little required in the sort of scenes we have been witnessing. "See the light and easy heart which never knew what it was to think before, how pensive it is now, how soft, how susceptible, how full of religious impre-

sions*." Here you find "all mystery, all pity, all mute awe and wonder; supernaturalism brought home to the very dullest; eternity laid open, and the nether darkness and the upper light-kingdom†!" After this last event many of the heedless youths of the town resumed their prayers of night and morn long before neglected. At such deaths one feels one's heart new opened. "Death does not speak;" but, says the Père Boutauld, "it has a silence which is the expression of the doctrine of the prophets and apostles, and which contains the noblest instructions that they have left us to help us to live well, and to answer on each occasion to the difficulties of our blinded conscience. All the counsels of the holy fathers are on the tongue of death. The wonder is, that without saying a word, it causes these instructions to enter into your heart, and that it does it with an eloquence and a force that the holy doctors have never been able to imitate‡." Death, if you will hear even Socrates and Cicero, makes us philosophers; for it recalls the mind from all things but meditation, calls the mind to itself, compels it to be with itself, and leads it from the body; in which abstraction they both say that the whole life of philosophers consists§. The beholding of death in the case of the young, and of one beloved, dissipates at least for a time, and the shortest respite is something gained, all vain thoughts. The concupiscence of the eyes, the pride of life, all that is earthly, ambitious, voluptuous, all the wisdom which has been made foolishness, it dispels all that with a sigh, like that of Flavius saying to his master,

> "O my good Lord, the world is but a word;
> Were it all yours to give it in a breath,
> How quickly were it gone!"

What was perhaps folly yesterday is to-day without a word of cant, wisdom; what you counted childish in the bower, when visiting it as a stranger, is now godlike to you in the room of

* Sterne. † Carlyle, Past and Present.
‡ Le Père Boutauld, Les Conseilles de la Sagesse.
§ Tuscul. i.

the dying or the dead. And on the other hand, there are instances when, as Virginia says,

> "———— so subtle are thy evils;
> In life they seem'd good angels, in death devils."

In this presence, the favour of great men, the gifts of the crown, all that emanates from man,—all the results of devotion to self, success in life, success in parliament, success in literature, leading articles, as Carlyle would say,—all that, fades away like a mist of the night, and wherever evil existed, verifying the lines,

> "Tho' the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small,
> Tho' He stands and waits with patience, with exactness grinds He all."

Whereas, on the contrary, all that is holy, all that is of youthful innocence, all that bears an impress of the Passion, all that emanates from faith, and from religion organized, all that is revered in the bower, assumes an incommensurable importance. Nothing human but the affections of the heart can stand this test; but every thing of faith, every thing of old Christianity, every thing sacramental, every thing symbolical in the old way, every thing sealed with the cross, stands it; the rite stands it; the rubric stands it, the habit stands it, the credentials stand it, and if we could see it then with our eyes, even the outward grandeur of the pontifical tiara becomes a thing we kneel before prostrate on the earth, with mind raised up to God who instituted them. Death, therefore, above all, when the young are its victims, reveals the truth of ancient Christianity; for a religion, I repeat it, that can stand such a test as this, will stand every thing.

But you who have not witnessed what we are attempting to describe, will say that all religions in the presence of death are regarded with veneration. Perhaps so: no one pretends that the thought or sight of death puts an end to the belief of men in the general truths to which every religion, as long as it continues to be religion at all, must more or less bear testimony. But what might strike any observer here is the fact that this great teacher imparts a stronger sense of the truth and divinity

of what, as we once showed, has such close relationship to the Children's Bower, namely, the attributes of that ancient religion, which supposes in those who profess it not persuasion and irresponsibility, but faith and obedience. After hearing his awful voice, her rites are no longer mummery, her prayers no longer idolatrous, her articles of faith no longer superstition, her organization no longer the addition of man. From the font of holy water, and the lighted taper, and the crucifix, and the beads, to the authority of the priest, who comes with the faculties of his ordinary to minister to the departing spirit, all becomes then invested with a sublimity and force of truth that the assistants, perhaps, after all their reading, never before dreamed of. The head, of course, can still hold out, and propose explanations of its own—for while the will persists it is invincible—but the heart for a time is vanquished, and the conscience, for a moment at least, restored to life.

So far we have only glanced at some of the impressions produced in the beholders by death in general. But in connexion with the Children's Bower, and the intense affections which ever reign within it, there are yet some particular lessons to remark as deducible from it.

These deaths, in the first place, then, of the young that we have been witnessing, this sudden withering of the beauty and the bravery of childhood and youth, seem not to be common deaths. They show the natural terrors and deformity of dissolution in a light singularly awful. Plato, in the Timæus, is inclined to contrast them with the death which follows old age, which last alone seems to be the end agreeable to nature, and attended rather by pleasure than by pain *. Here, on the contrary, naturally viewed, there is nothing to abate our fearful astonishment; for what a thing is it to see the angelic child in the agony! his vigorous brother, despite "his active practice, his May of youth, and bloom of lustyhood," who seemed designed for so long and noble a career, suddenly struck, cut down, rent, dissolved with violence, in opposition to all the apparent ends and visible designs of nature! This is not like the common waste observable in material things; this seems to

* 63.

answer no purpose analogous to what we observe elsewhere in creation; and therefore, alluding to such a close, a poet says,

"Something there was in his life incomplete, imperfect, unfinished,
As if a morning of June, with all its music and sunshine,
Suddenly paused in the sky, and, fading, slowly descended
Into the East again, from whence it late had arisen *."

Those advanced in years, the aged and the decrepit, the wit, the philosopher, or the courtier, whom their occupations, their tempers, or their fortunes have hindered from intimate relations, die often without producing any other effect than that of causing "a mourning without grief," as Saint-Simon says, and adding a new topic for a day to the conversation of the talkative. On the death of the Duc de Coislin, his honours passed to M. de Metz, "et cela fit la conversation," says the noble author. "I find the sober men of the court," says Pepys, "troubled for the death of Sir W. Compton, and yet not so as to hinder or lessen their mirth, talking, laughing, and doing every thing else, just as if there was no such thing. Lord! to see how the world makes nothing of the memory of a man an hour after he is dead †." But the child, the little playmate, and the φίλταθ' ἑταίρων, when thus become two tender bedfellows for dust! — when one thinks of the lovely form of little John reduced to ashes! — ay, then, indeed, there is an impression that it would be hard to qualify produced even on those most convinced with Plato, and on higher ground than he ever stood on, that the communion between soul and body is not better than the separation ‡. A feeling of wonder creeps upon the mind respecting them, as if there was nothing natural in what we beheld, as if death, as it now exhibits itself, is something not intended, something opposed to the scheme of creation, something not to be accounted for by believing that all which is is right, something that leaves us only, as far as nature can assist us, blank and terrible amaze; while, even after reading Plato, we repeat such words as—

* Longfellow. † Diary ii. 47. 108.

‡ De Leg. xiii.

"Now thou art not—and yet the man whose guilt
Has wearied Heaven for vengeance—he who bears
False witness—he who takes the orphan's bread,
And robs the widow—he who spreads abroad
Polluted hands of mockery of prayer,
Are left to cumber earth *."

Nevertheless, from these very impressions of wonder will arise, to the surprise even perhaps of those who recognize it, a new motive for the love of God. Since men can learn from them to read with more discernment the Divine announcement which is presented to the eyes of all mankind in the Book of books—the crucifix, representing the sum of all—the Passion.

Death is awful to behold, whatever it may be in reality to those who suffer it, who, in youth at least, probably feel, even in regard to it, the truth of the saying, "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." It seems a portentous mystery when we see those who love God suffering it. Had we been left to natural theology, or to the sublime anticipations of Plato alone, we might murmur, and think it a hard fate, or, perhaps, we might be tempted to embrace Manichæan opinions, and admit two principles, which the philosopher himself seems not far from subscribing to. The mystery remains impenetrable; but since God has made Himself amenable to his own laws, all this difficulty, in the way of loving Him at least, is at an end. After witnessing the death of those who loved Him, we can love Him. We may be sure that He is sorry for what they suffer, and that He sympathizes with them. He permits nothing to happen to them but what He Himself endured, no chalice of agony to be presented to their lips but what He Himself has tasted. We can love Him, therefore, as a fellow-sufferer; and men, accordingly, after assisting at such deaths, do love Him, even as a brother, with all their soul, and with all their mind, and with all their strength. God, who is the author of our salvation, will conduct us, says the Psalmist, happily in his way: "Our God, the God who saves us, will bless us †." "Who could have salvation," adds St. Augustin, "if God did not cure Him? but in

* Bryant. † Ps. lxvii.

order to obviate the objection of those who might say why then do we die if we are saved, the prophet adds, God Himself left this world by death; as if He said, Why do you, weak and miserable man, complain of being obliged by the condition of your nature to leave this world by death? Your Lord did not choose to leave it by any other door. Console yourself, then, instead of being overwhelmed, since God Himself died. For we are saved by hope*." To feel all the force of these words, to understand the depth of love comprised in the Passion, in the mystery of the crucifix, to be able to read that book thoroughly, with a profound sense of all its depth and all its tenderness, one must have known the Children's Bower in happy days, and after that have beheld some such scene as I have been attempting to describe. Infatuated philosopher! you refer us to nature; and what do we see there? Unmitigated, inexplicable, and what we might think unjust inflictions,—youths in their agony, children in their agony, death foreseen with all its consequences, tasted, by survivors at least, in all its horrors, by men alone foreseen and tasted thus. But look at the crucifix. Think of the Passion. What are all your dreams and shapeless conceptions compared with this page that reveals God suffering, not only what He alone could suffer, but also what these youths and children suffered, and, to boot, what they who loved them suffered—dying or seeing die in the same agony that He experienced—and all to do away for ever with death and agony? No, incredulous philosopher, you will not persuade us to desert the bower for your benches. We, with children, will cling to the crucifix, to the memory of the Passion, and exclaim, like this dying youth in his last moments, "Montrez-moi les clous."

It is the opinion of profound writers that especial graces are attached to such pure and premature ends as are commemorated in the circle of children. Truly one may believe it. Think of this last example—

> "——— Had he been practised,
> And known the way of mischief, travell'd in it,
> And given his blood and honour up to reach it,
> Forgot religion, and the line he sprung on,"—

* In Ps. lxvii.

oh, Heaven! how different would have been his end! And, in general—

> "Death—who are thine accusers? who?
> The living.—They who never felt thy power,
> And know thee not."

Death, personified in a recent poem, boldly asserts his claim to be considered the friend, not the enemy of mankind. "He sits," he says, citing an instance, "on some lighthouse; he waits for a coming vessel, freighted with sorrow, with emigrants' hearts grieving for the past, and with hopes that are sure to be disappointed:"

> "'Twas that ship I watch'd for. The beacon's ray
> Shines hopeful yet warningly through the spray:
> But now 'tis obscured: all is starless night;—
> I stand at the window before the light.
> On comes the doom'd ship; it takes one blind leap,
> And, shiver'd, falls back in the gloomy deep.
> 'Tis gone; and as silent as flakes of snow
> The sleepers have pass'd. They have pass'd from woe,
> To wake on a peacefuller shore I trow *."

Men themselves, however, as we lately observed, can sometimes divine the friendliness of death.

> "Loud as that trumpet doom'd to raise the dead,
> God's voice doth sometimes fall on us in fear:
> More often with a music low yet clear,
> Soft whispering 'It is I: be not afraid †.'"

I know that the stern and austere are apt to denounce such views as too agreeable, and fitting rather poets and Gentiles than Christians who possess a knowledge of all truth; but yet Gerson, who was certainly severe enough, and mindful sufficiently of God's judgments, seems to have adopted and approved of them; for, writing to console men on the death of friends, he says, "We ought to have a sober joy when we see those we love migrating from the misery of this life, as if escaping from some great peril and tribulation. Who can ever think, or compre-

* C. Boner, The New Dance of Death.
† Aubrey de Vere.

hend, or mention all the sufferings to which human nature is subject? At one time we are well, then sick; now joyful, then sad. He who wishes to remain longer here only seeks to continue in pain and affliction *." The young, therefore, may be excused, and even imitated, when they seem to feel so thoroughly that death is, as the philosopher said, only a journey to our own house; and, in fact, as we before remarked, it is they who seem most apt to regard it as a harbour of refuge prepared for us by that Divine Power which never created us either for annihilation or for misery †. Though Cebes said that it was, perhaps, "some boy within us" which makes us dread death ‡, it is the young who would most understand the beauty and truth of that passage in which Cicero recommends us to look on death as an escape. A man navigating, he says, whom pirates pursue, will dismiss all fears if some god should say to him, Cast yourself out of the ship, a dolphin will receive you, as Arion, who was thus carried safe over the waters, and borne to the place he wished to repair to,—"sic urgentibus asperis et odiosis doloribus, quo sit confugiendum vides §." As Callimachus remarks, "Priam wept much oftener than Troilus." It is a slow, and not always even a sure medicine which length of days brings to us, when we come to old age, as Homer says, in the house:

> "That life is better life, past fearing death,
> Than that which lives to fear."

That we may conceal nothing of the hopes and consolations which the "leavings" of our bower found after this last bereavement, hear once more without disdain that dreams to pure childhood continued in visions of the night to strengthen it. Yes, again, and to the same young mourner, the youngest of these boys appeared resplendent with light. He came smiling, exulting, and suffered himself to be placed sitting on the knees of his little former companion, just as of old, only that she felt no weight from him now; and to her question whether the last taken was in heaven, replied that he was there, and nearer than himself to God. It was as if he had said,

* Sermo de Consolatione Mortis Parentum.
† Tuscul. i. ‡ Phædo. § Tuscul. ii.

"Sweet mercy to the gates of heaven
This songster led, his sins forgiven,
The tuneful conflict, the heart riven
With vain endeavour,
And memory of earth's bitter leaven
Effaced for ever!"

Nine months later it was whispered in the bower that sleep had again disclosed some secrets. Thomas was not seen, but with other voices "Salve Regina" he was heard to sing, as the morning of a Sunday dawned.

In fine, there is a lesson derived from all events resembling these last in connexion with the bower, which may yield in practical importance to no other; for the memory of past conduct in regard to those who are departed may direct men to act better in future the parts which may remain to them.

It would be in vain to deny it; we are too apt to be unjust to each other, if not in great, at least in little things, which make up much of the happiness and misery of life. We are disposed to depreciate what we possess, and to estimate the qualities or graces of no living person as they deserve. What is aught but as 'tis valued? When one looks back upon a child, a youth such as many who depart from this life daily, after resembling those we have been describing throughout these pages, men will sometimes sigh, to think how greatly they might have added to their happiness, and benefited them by words of encouragement and of affection while learning much from them, as they might have done, watching and listening to them more. How they would now treasure up every word of the absent ones! but the pure flow of those fresh fountains of heart and intelligence passed hardly noticed, and less studied. Moreover, even those who loved may have feared unnecessarily, mistrusted groundlessly, blamed unjustly, and forbad with foolish rigour what very probably God intended, approved of, and allowed. Some one says, "We grow wrinkled with frowning and facing youth." At all events, as Chaucer says, "eelde and youthe ben often at debeat." But

"——— when our friends we lose,
Our alter'd feelings dictate to our views;

What in their tempers teased us or distress'd,
Is with our anger and the dead at rest;
And much we grieve, no longer trial made,
For that impatience which we then display'd;
Now to their love and worth of every kind,
A soft compunction turns the afflicted mind;
Virtues neglected then adored become,
And graces slighted blossom on the tomb *."

Then we recall to memory what we once slighted; the deep remark and the warm eulogium, the happy laugh and the sweet innocence, the little story and the tune on the cornet, and the boating and the rides, and I know not what besides,

Πολλὰ μάλ' οὐδ' ἂν νηῦς ἑκατόζυγος ἄχθος ἀροῖτο.

Seated lately near a bridge, beneath which a boat was being rowed, a sorrowful stranger gazing on the current heard a young woman passing say to those with her, "How well he rows! Ah, that poor young Hubbard! I always think of him now when I see a boat!" Alas! yes, fair one, so it is with us all when we see or hear this and that: we think of the absent more lovingly than when we might have cheered them, encouraged them, directed, and perhaps even from some dangers saved them by a smile. When the cage is empty we love the flown birds; we love the absent for what we once thought faults; and when we hear these faults, real or imaginary, now by strangers slightly glanced at, even though we had not seen the great tears streaming down the cheeks of these poor offenders in their agony, we love them on account of those very failings more. Yes; for, to use the words of a great writer, not discordant with the voice that has been heard upon our earth, enjoining us to aim at what is highest, "imperfection is in some sort essential to all we know of life; all things are literally better, lovelier, and more beloved for the imperfections which have been divinely appointed, that the law of human life may be effort, and the law of human judgment mercy."

So by this lesson we are taught to value higher than before

* Crabbe.

every Children's Bower, and the company that may be still left in any particular bower—the kind and charitable thoughts that sprang from it, the efforts that it witnessed, the judgments that it formed, and the manners that it first gave rise to.

Before, however, providing for the future, and thinking about reducing the lesson to practice, there remains an obligation to fulfil with regard to the past. Men have first to reflect upon their own past conduct in having wronged those who have left them.

The memory of the dead does not last very long in the world; but it will be cherished in the circle of young people, which is a fresh instance to prove its superiority over many formal schools. "Of memory," says a philosopher, "which makes so large a part of the excellence of the human soul, and which has so much influence upon all its other powers, but a small portion has been allotted to the animal world. Those belonging to it soon forget their offspring, though while it was before their eyes they evinced love not less than that of a human parent." The world has a saying which might lead us to infer that it was sometimes not very different with men. We have all heard the proverb, "Out of sight out of mind." Perhaps the idea of handing down the characters of those most loved in life, will seem to the long grown-up world supremely ridiculous, an indication in the person who entertains it of eccentricity, of indelicacy, of an unmanly regard to what relates only to himself; there is nothing that he may not expect to hear after such a manifestation of what will be deemed weakness. But young people in general will not see all this alleged absurdity at first sight. With persons who have ever loved the bower the said idea will seem very natural, and even commendable. With them no systematic forgetfulness or reserve respecting the beloved dead is possible; they catch the spirit of the young, and to each of them can sometimes be applied literally the Homeric lines,

> Ἥματα δ' ἐν πέτρῃσι καὶ ἠϊόνεσσι καθίζων,
> Δάκρυσι καὶ στοναχῇσι καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἐρέχθων,
> Πόντον ἐπ' ἀτρύγετον δερκέσκετο, δάκρυα λείβων.

Each has to pay, however late, his debt of love to the departed,

and you may trust him that, in some form or other, he will try to pay it. At first, of course, it will be with nature's tears. "O grief! whither wouldst thou again lead me?" "Men are no less unhappy, their issues not being gracious, than they are in losing them, when they have approved their virtues."

> "Were he deformed, crooked, old, and sere,
> Ill-fac'd, worse bodied, shapeless every where;
> Vicious, ungentle, foolish, blunt, unkind,
> Stigmatical in making, worse in mind,"

were he, as the poet says, all this, the survivor might feel emancipated from all mere human obligation with regard to him; but in other cases, which are, after all, the commonest cases, how can he as a man discharge the sum of all that he feels he owes him? He must for one thing lay aside all fear of being thought partial, and praise him, even though he were his son. Yesterday he might have asked,

> "——— en erit unquam
> Ille dies, mihi quum liceat tua dicere facta?"

To-day, as was observed at first, he can begin and end in presence of the cold, the haughty, the critical, the sarcastic, the unfeeling, of good company, of society as it is called, in a word, in presence of "the world," with praises of him such as children and common persons love to utter from their hearts, and cast shame and what is called delicacy and good taste to the winds. He can even repeat with boldness the well-known line, and say,

> "Semper honos nomenque tuum laudesque manebunt."

> "Ah, happy hills! ah, pleasing shade!
> Ah, bowers loved in vain!
> Where once my boy so careless stray'd,
> A stranger yet to pain!"

But the spirit of the Children's Bower will not be content with such payment to the dead as consists in eulogies and lamentations, which last at least, when long protracted, sound unmanly. The genius of that place, even without the light of faith, would dictate words like those of Sulpicius addressed to Cicero, con-

doling with him on the death of Tullia, his child, and saying, "If there be any sense in the dead, such was their love and piety to you, that they must be concerned to see how much you afflict yourself." The children's views in this respect are literally Homeric. "What!" they exclaim, "do you want to bring him back?"

———— *ποῖον τὸν μῦθον ἔειπες;*
ἄνδρα θνητὸν ἐόντα, πάλαι πεπρωμένον αἴσῃ,
ἀψ ἐθέλεις θανάτοιο δυσηχέος ἔξανα λῦσαι;

Enlightened by Divine faith, that genius tells you that grief must henceforth wear a holier form. Need I tell you what that form is found to be? You know already where you have to go for it; you know where it is that the memory of the dead perisheth not, where it is associated with a certain resumed intercourse with them, and above all with prayer. Some we know renounce the latter; but

"Are not in truth these requiems sacred ties,
Woven out of passion's sharpest agonies,
Subdued, composed, and formalized by art
To fix a wiser sorrow in the heart?
The prayer for them whose hour is pass'd away,
Says to the living, Profit while ye may."

And besides, might it not be well to look at these things sometimes, even from the sceptic's point of view? You hear of founding for ever eucharistic sacrifices, that is, you hear of placing means in the hands of good men, if you will not allow them to be the best men, which will enable them to raise buildings that are admirable, even on the utilitarian's principles, to assist the poor, to maintain schools for their children, to comfort the unhappy. Come now, suppose for an instant that all Christian antiquity was in error; suppose that God forgives not in the world to come, and that the Bible errs in saying that He does; that He does nothing for prayer; for the pure oblations which were to be offered up; that there is no communion between this world and the next; I ask you, man of ambition, man of pleasure, in a moment of awakened conscience, after providing for all your legitimate wants, what better could you do with your superfluous treasures than employ them thus? But

soft, I do digress, and the hypothesis suits not the calm gravity of what should be our last thoughts.

Well, then, the old Christian usages in harmony with the feelings of the bower are to be observed. So then follow funerals such as we have witnessed, with many shining tapers to lighten the darkness of the living, and arouse them to a sense of faith; so follow prayers, such as we have heard responded to, full of hope in agony,

> "Take them, O Father, in immortal trust!
> Ashes to ashes, dust to kindred dust,
> Till the last angel rolls the stone away,
> And a new morning brings eternal day!"

So then follow anniversaries, the observance of which is felt as a duty, to use the words of the Duc de Saint-Simon, "qui l'emporte sur tout autre*." So then follow foundations to direct posterity, and, however maligned, eternally to profit all; not suppressing grief, but sanctifying it; not condemning, but utilizing sorrow, leaving those who feel it to express their resolution in those approved and canonized words, "Donec aspiret dies et inclinentur umbræ vadam ad montem myrrhæ et ad collem thuris:" "till the shadows depart, and the day of blessed eternity appear, I will go to the mount of myrrh."

Lastly, there remains what we have already glanced at—the debt to the living. How is this to be paid? A moment's consideration will show. You remember with regret what you omitted to do while those you loved were with you. Well, thenceforth you resolve to be more discreet, and "manage well your latest stake." "Gather and study," you say to yourself, "the good that is learned in the Children's Bower:"

> "Gather and treasure up the good they yield—
> All that they teach of virtue, of pure thoughts
> And kind affections, reverence for thy God
> And for thy brethren."

Above all, while they are with you show, prove in a common humanized as well as Christian way, that you love them. As

* Saint-Simon, vi. 285.

Johnson says, "Let us make haste to do what we shall certainly at last wish to have done; let us return the caresses of our friends, and endeavour by mutual endearments to heighten that tenderness which is the balm of life." Henceforth you know whom you must seek to please, though absent and invisible; and you know sufficiently, in the region of pure love to which they are flown, what would please and what displease them. Consider how you prize now all that once belonged to them, even down to what you may have formerly mistrusted at your door, their ἔθνον ἑταίρων! Yes, while they lived, perhaps you counted it a fault that they complied with that great law of nature, the observation of which drew from Homer the exclamation,

Ὡς αἰεὶ τὸν ὁμοῖον ἄγει θεὸς ὡς τὸν ὁμοῖον.

Now you would be glad to see all that nation once again besieging, as before, your gates. Every trifle that is associated with the memory of those gone, assumes a value in your eyes now. You keep something that they used to wear, as if it were a great treasure, though it were only their poor worn shoes and boots, and torn straw hat. Look on other children, then, though strangers to you, with a view to the possibility of their being taken, too, and consider how every thing that they wear would then be precious to some eyes. How like to your absent one are these boys you meet with in the street. Do you not often say to each, though inaudibly,

"Sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat!
Et nunc æquali tecum pubesceret ævo."

When the Duc and Duchesse de Beauvilliers lost their two sons, Saint-Simon says that they used to look on other boys as if they had been their own; that great tears would fall down their cheeks as they looked on them, which they would seek to hide, saying that it was not the fault of these poor things that they had lost their own children; and that they would treat them with all sort of kindness. This is what you should do when you trace even in these unknown lads a resemblance to your own. Let them seem to you your sons or your little brothers; and besides, depend upon it, that even now, as they

play or labour in their several vocations, God's eye looks on them, and on all belonging to them, with as much love as it did on yours. Imitate God by loving them. Love the living henceforth, as you now have learned to love the dead; love them in their thoughts, in their words, in their actions, in their virtues, ay, and in their failings too—if you would be human—for they will err sometimes, they would be angels else; but persist in imitating the Father of our great common family, who loves us all. Like Him, bear with them, endure them, pity them, forgive them, and then hope one day to be yourself pitied and forgiven.

"Swiftly our pleasures glide away,
Our hearts recall the distant day
With many sighs;
The moments that are speeding fast
We heed not, but the past—the past—
More highly prize *."

Wearied with the great treachery of earthly things, with all that in the dregs of life is stale, flat, and unprofitable, men come from time to time seeking to refresh and renew their spirits by observing the beautiful characteristic traits of pure intelligence and of pure affection that can be witnessed in the Children's Bower. Well, excepting in the way of instruction, it deceives and, in one respect even, actually cheats them like the rest. There they possess, and they possess not, as Plato says of those who keep doves. The birds of paradise fly away: they are yours, but they are in the sky. They are not to be laid hold of; their place is void. The child and the youth are gone to keep, in a way of sympathy with time, where it exists not, their next patron feast with those who shielded them in their cradles, with Mary, our dear Lady, with sweet St. John, and Thomas the Apostle, whose imperfection for a moment conduces now to the confirmation and eternal good of all. Henceforth, if we would consort with them, and hope in a more blessed life to meet their spirits, we must seek them in the Children's true Bower,—up on high, in youth's own native clime, in a garden of unfading

* Coplas de Mauriqne, transl. by Longfellow.

flowers, where are gales that bear no death, and seats that will not be forsaken. Therefore,

"To One alone let thoughts arise,
The Eternal Truth, the Good and Wise.
To Him we cry,
Who shared on earth our common lot,
But the world comprehended not
His deity."

Reader, in these lines you may suppose that you have the epilogue. It is said well, is it not? and you know, above all in parting, 'tis a kind of good deed to say well; for St. Augustin, after citing the words, "I have heard you in the secret of the tempest," which he explains as the tempest of the heart, adds, "If you must believe from the heart to be just, you must confess with your mouth to be saved *." Oh! I could tell you—but let it be. Reader, for your long patience with me, accept distracted thanks.

"——— Fair world, adieu!
Thy dales and hills are fading from the view:
Some soon shall mount upon wide-spreading pinions,
Far from the narrow bounds of thy dominions."

In a new and higher sense can be interpreted the song of emigrants,

"Long parted have we been;"

for we all are speeding to another shore; and, in reference to those already gone to it, we can say, without being blamed,

"It needs but their embraces,
And all their smiling faces,
For a day of true rejoicing in that new land of ours."

Meanwhile, not yet escaped from dull mortality's harsh net,

"——— For sweet relief let's dwell
On humbler thoughts, and let this strange assay
Begun in gentleness, die so away †."

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* In Ps. lxxx. † Keats.

pl *is* would have seemed a period to such as love not sorrow; but another, as the poet says,

> "To amplify too much would take much more,
> And top extremity."

As far as can be related in this book, the whole story is now told. All that was once visible in our John dissolves away for the present where we saw him at the beginning of this book entombed. The remains of his poor brother are crumbling where he died, within sight of that sweet land of France, where he had so many friends, and where, in his boyhood, he was once so happy. Close to the meadow they repose where he often played and sauntered. The unquiet sea shakes the whole rock with foamy battery beneath the holy cell dedicated to peace, which has received his bones, and will soon receive those of his little brother. But no wrath, with his consuming voice, affrights these buildings.

> "——— Charity with prayer,
> Humility with abstinence combined,
> Are here the guardians of a holy mind."

So here that poor tenement of clay is left,—near where he often prayed, and where those dearest to him on earth were wont to pray. The last burial, like the first, by the promiscuous gathering of crowds, that literally wept and lamented, by its antique rites, and by its heavenly symbols, carried one back to primeval times, carried one onwards to the eternal years. Both caused smiles with tears—smiles that the young had such a burial, tears that they so soon required it.

> "Alas! for the flowers that were gather'd so soon!
> Alas! for the light that was quench'd in its noon!
> The world will forget them, but we shall deplore,
> And cherish their names in our hearts evermore."

This whole book is intended as, in some sort, a protraction, in a poor, fond, human, and imaginative way, of their obsequies. O loved ones, "Cape dona extrema tuorum." The wish—the attempt to make time speak of them longer, and make records, to keep them, is natural, and will not pollute their peace. It is not incompatible with the severity of truth. The most exact

and penetrating minds are in this respect as anxious as the commonest. Biot, when he published his last work, had the same intention. "I ought to thank God," he says, "for having granted me sufficient time to raise this monument to the memory of my poor son. While devoting myself to this pious duty, I believed that I had him near me, and that he felt this last testimony of our mutual affection. Yes, there are communications of sentiments which survive this mystery of death, and which reunite the loving souls that it has separated." It is well, in finishing, to listen to these high words from such a man, to hear the testimony of science spontaneously yielded in attestation of the certainty of what is of faith. The words are a defence, at least, of our undertaking; for love equals all things, and the most obscure will seek, equally with the most illustrious, to show honour to their beloved dead. To such ambition I, no doubt, must now plead guilty. Yes, it was a lofty aim. I have wished to arrange, as it were, a vast and an imposing procession; I have sought to call forth, as assistants at the funerals of this child and youth, some, at least, of their ancestors and, as one might say, living relatives, that is, representatives who resembled them in their character, persons collected from the human race, of all ages, taken from the one family of the innocent, the heroic, and the religious, the vast brotherhood of nature and of grace, of blood and of spirit. I have not shrunk from inviting even those who in antiquity seem to have aspired at what they of Christian times alone could realize. Hence have passed as it were before us Plato and St. Augustin, Pindar and David. To assist at it, I have called some from the dead, and others from the living. There have been fellow-countrymen, and those who from foreign nations have passed the seas obedient to our call. Contingents there were from the court of the great monarch that heard Bossuet, and from the schools of the religious who knew One only that is great. There have been witnessed bands of sweet children, heroic youths, holy fathers, and a long line of canonized saints. Deputations there have been from the nobility of the world, ushered by ducal and princely authors. Things splendid and illustrious from every sphere have had their place in it, from the pomps of nature to the chosen of human grandeur, from an order of thoughts all contemplative and spiritual, to the ephemeral

joys of our early dreams. And if the idea has not been realized, if the execution has proved only the feebleness and disorder of the mind that was entrusted with the conduct of this great and, I may add, this pious solemnity, at least let the immensity of its pains, conveying an idea of the worth that prompted them, of the beauty of the examples that they were intended to transmit, of the love that they sought to manifest, claim indulgence and bespeak pity.

Of course, there is nothing more simple or common, or in a certain sense uninteresting, than the particular deaths thus commemorated, especially in eventful times like these on which we are fallen, when it might be thought no one can attend to any thing but the perils of empires, national catastrophes, and the fate of men the most illustrious, like Havelock, for whom a whole kingdom mourns. Of course, the immediate object in such sketches of a momentary existence passed and closed in the midst of us obscurely did not call for any expenditure of words. As far as that alone was concerned, the fewest and simplest would have been best; but to those who would object to my prodigal or ridiculous extravagance, viewing it only in connexion with that object, I would reply, that there was kept in view all throughout an ultimate and general end to which the other was made subordinate, an end commensurate with any magnificence that we could possibly employ in order to further it; though I admit that it was an end which could never be realized, even if the greatest genius had attempted it, without the cordial co-operation of others. To obtain this happy result, which should be the object of all objects, every thing, I knew all along, would depend, reader, on yourself. It is you who can ensure success to such an undertaking.

Ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ μὲν οὗτος ἄ-
εθλος ὑποκείσεται· τὸ δὲ
πρᾶξιν φίλαν δίδοι *.

What was that supreme object, that ultimate end? It was to bestow such honours on the beloved dead as might prove not merely gratifying to the heart of those who lamented them, but

* Pind. Olymp. i. 85.

salutary and efficient in the highest sense—a service to the dead by conferring benefit on the living. Other honours, of course, would be only a fond delusion. Funeral praises are frail offerings, not to be trusted for the preservation even of a name. No less frail are sepulchres of marble, porphyry, and brass, in hungry churchyards, subject to the powers of envy, avarice, mis-devotion, or all-devouring time; but if one reader should henceforth turn to the Children's Bower, and feel his heart throb higher while thinking of such graces as are here attributed, with strict, impartial accuracy, to those two who are gone, (though they are but general characteristics of its influence; for I seek to draw no invidious distinctions—"Omnibus hic erit unus honos;") if one child should henceforth wish to copy what he hears of John's angelic graces, or one youth, who looks pale and trembles at this chance, be moved, by observing the character of his poor brother, to love himself less and others more, to keep his mind more unspotted from the selfish world, and his heart more innocent; to cultivate manners more gentle, more affectionate, more respectful, and more considerate; to be more kind to all, more thoughtful of the poor, more docile to his mother, more reverential each time he assists at the mysteries of the Passion (you know at what altar they are daily celebrated)—then that ultimate object I spoke of will be achieved; then the writer of such pages, whatever you may think of his extravagance, will have pleased the dead; and his offering will really have accomplished what the Gentiles in their blindness ascribed to vain observances. In a higher than an Homeric sense, for, in accordance with the loftiest truth, one may believe that these two brothers, in the distance of eternity, will not be insensible to such obsequies; for since the virtues vouchsafed to them will then have kindled others, which, in their turn, again may be transmitted to later generations in succession; (for who can say where one kind word or one good action ends?) the leaving this record of them, in consideration of such consequences, will be a service extending beyond the bounds of time, and transcending all the limits of human thought. They will then have had their acceptable pile. Theirs will be a monument round which circling hosts of blessed spirits will hold celestial games, obsequies, as it were, celebrated round a pyramid raised of loving hearts, that no poet's lyre may transmit to fame

on earth, but which will stand emblazoned elsewhere, and engraved in angels' diamantine rolls for ever.

The Iliad, as many know, concludes with

Ὣς οἵγ' ἀμφίεπον τάφον Ἕκτορος ἱπποδάμοιο.

There is a sentiment superior to the immediate object which it contemplates, and to the images which it employs. The heart, like the faith that lifts it up, speaks at once a language both human and celestial, and finds in itself a sweet and natural faculty of assimilation, a certain inalienable right of property in all that is genuine in what has been left to us by ancient art. When profoundly moved, it even unconsciously makes use of the forms of that poesy which is true as nature, and imperishable as the type of man. Grief, directed as we have been supposing, is more solemn than ever Priam's was; and there is nothing forced, frigid, affected, or extreme in seeking to commemorate it, even though we recur to such an image as that of Hector and his burial. Grief, as Constance says, is proud. It is for you to bow to it. When youths of an immortal type thus pass away, private sorrows have their dignity, giving no advantage to the stubborn critic, apt without a theme for depravation. Some one, of course, may not comprehend that dignity; but he has no children, as Macduff exclaims. Those who try, as best they can, to express love for them, need fear no father's blame, perhaps even no stranger's sarcasm, when they seek unpremeditatedly to finish with an emphasis that simple facts fraught with unutterable woe impart; when they merely say, "There were the strewments, and the songs of requiem, and the bringing home of bell and burial;" when they add the rest is silence,—and with two funerals their writings end.

THE END.

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